PARTISAN REVIEW

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THE IRON THROAT

Tillie Lerner

THE WHISTLES always woke Marie. They pierced into her sleep like some guttural voiced metal beast, tearing at her; the sound meant, in one way, terror. During the day if the whistle blew, she knew it meant death—somebody's poppa or brother, perhaps her own—in that fearsome place below the ground, the mine.

"Goddam that blowhorn," she heard her father mutter. Creak of him getting out of bed. The door closed, with yellow light from the kerosene lamp making a long crack on the floor. Clatter of dishes. Her mother's tired, grimy voice.

"What'll ya have? Coffee and eggs. There ain't no bacon."

"Don't bother with anything. Haven't time. I gotta stop by Kvaternicks and get the kid. He's starting work today."

"What're they going to give him?"

"Little of everything at first, I guess, trap, throw switches, maybe timberin'."

"Well, he'll be starting one punch ahead of the old man. Chris began as a breaker boy." (Behind both stolid faces the claw claw of a buried thought—and maybe finish like him, buried under slaty roof which an economical company had not bothered to timber.)

"He's thirteen, ain't he?" asked Marie.

"I guess. Nearer to fourteen."

"Marie was tellin me, it would break Chris' heart if he only knew. He wanted the kid to be different. Get an edjiccation."

"Yeah? Them foreigners do have funny ideas."

"Oh, I dunno. Then she says that she wants the girls to become nuns, so they won't have to worry where the next meal is comin' from, or have to have kids."

"Well, what other earthly use can a woman have, I'd like to know."

"She says she doesn't want 'em raising a lot of brats to get their heads blowed off in the mine. I guess she takes Chris's . . . passing away pretty hard. It's kinda affected her mind. She keeps talking about the old country, the fields, and what they thought it would be like here. —'all buried in da bowels of earth," she finishes.

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"Say, what does she think she is? a poet?"

"And she talks about the coal. Says it oughta be red, and let people see how they get it with blood."

"Quit your woman's blabbin'," said Jim Holbrook, irritated suddenly. "I'm goin' now."

Morning sounds. Scrunch of boots. The tinkle of his pail, swinging. Shouted greetings to fellow workers across the street. Her mother turning down the yellow light and creaking into bed. All the sounds of the morning weaving over the memory of the whistle like flowers growing lovely over a hideous corpse. Mazie slept again.

Mrs. Holbrook lay in the posture of sleep. Thoughts, like worms, crept within her. Of Marie Kvaternick, of Chris's dreams for the boys. Of the paralysing moment when the iron throat of the whistle shrieked forth its announcement of death, and women poured from every house to run for the tipple. Of her kids. Mazie, Will, Ben, the baby. Mazie, for all her six and a half years was like a woman sometimes. It's living like this does it, she thought, makes 'em old before their time. Thoughts of the last accident writhed in her blood. There were whispered rumors that the new fire boss, the super's nephew, never made the trips to see if there was gas. Didn't the men care? They never let on. The whistle. In her a deep man's voice suddenly arose, moaning over and over, "Gawd, Gawd, Gawd."

The sun sent its grimy light thru the window of the three room wooden shack, twitching over Mazie's face, filtering across to where Anna Holbrook bent over the washtub. Mazie awoke suddenly, the baby was crying. She stumbled over to the wooden box that held it, warming the infant to her body. Then she dressed, changed the baby's diaper with one of the old flower sacks her mother used for the purpose and went into the kitchen.

"Ma, what's there to eat?"

"Coffee. It's on the stove. Wake Will and Ben and don't bother me. I got washing to do."

Later. "Ma?"

"Yes?"

"What's an edication?"

"An edjiccation?" Mrs. Holbrook arose from amidst the shifting vapors of the washtub, and with the suds dripping from her red hands, walked over and stood impressively over Mazie. "An edjiccation is what you kids are going to get. It means your hands stay white, and you read books, and work in an office. Now, get the kids and scat. But don't go too far, or I'll knock your block off."

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Mazie lay under the hot Wyoming sun, between the outhouse and the garbage heap. From the ground arose a nauseating smell. Food had been rotting in the garbage pile for years as there was no such thing as a garbage collection. There was no other place for Mazie to lie, for the one patch of green in the yard was between these two spots. She pushed her mind hard against the things half known, not known. "I am Mazie Holbrook," she said softly, "I am a knowen things. I can diaper a baby. I can tell two ghost stories. I know words and words. Tipple. Edjiccation. Bug dust. Superintendent. My poppa can lick any man in this here town. Sometimes the whistle blows and everyone starts a runnen. Things come a blowen my hair and it's soft, like the baby laughing." A phrase trembled into her mind, "Bowels of earth." She shuddered. It was mysterious and terrible to her. "Bowels of earth. It means the mine. Bowels is the stummy. Earth is a stummy and mebbe she ets the men that come down. Men and daddy goin in like the day, and comin out black. Earth black, and pops face and hands black, and he spits from his mouth black. Night comes and it is black. Coal is black. It makes a fire. The sun is makin a fire on me now, but it is not black. Some color I'm not a knowen, it is," she said wistfully, "but I'll have that learnin someday. Poppa says the ghosts down there start a fire. That's what blowed Sheen McEvoys face off so it's red. It made him crazy. Night be a comen, and everythin becomes like under the ground. I think I could find coal then. And a lamp like poppa's comes out, but in the sky. Momma looks all days as if she thinks she goin to be hearin something. The whistle blows. Poppa says it is the ghosts laughin' cause they have hit a man in the stummy, or on the head. Chris, that happened too. Chris, who sang those funny songs. He was a furriner. Bowels of earth they put him in. Callin it dead. Mebbe it's for coal, more coal. That's one thing I'm not knowen. Day comes and night comes and the whistle blows and payday comes. Like the flats runnin on the tipple they come, one right a floowen the other. Mebbe I am black inside too. The bowels of earth . . . I am a knowen things, and I am not knowen things, and somethings I know, but am not knowin . . . sun on me, and bowels of earth under. . . . "

(Andy Kvaternick stumbles thru the night. The late September wind fills the night with lost and crying voices, and drowns all but the largest stars.

Chop, chop, goes the black sea of his mind. How wild and stormy inside, how the shipwrecked thoughts plunge and whirl. Andy lifts his face to the stars and breathes, frantic, like an almost drowned man.

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But it is useless, Andy. The coal dust lies too far inside, it will lie forever, like a hand squeezing your heart, choking at your throat. The bowels of earth have claimed you.

Breathe and breathe. How fresh the night. But the air you will know will only be sour with sweat, and this strong wind on your body turn to the clammy hands of sweat tickling under your underwear.

Breathe and breathe, Andy, turn your eyes to the stars. Their beauty, never known before, pricks like tears. You belong to a starless night now, unimaginably black, without light, like death. Perhaps the sweat glistening on the roof rock seen for an instant will seem like stars.

And no more the sweet rain, Andy, child now of the earth's bowels. Soggy water slushing underfoot, water dripping through a niggerhead, these are yours. No more, Andy, rain for you, or wind, or stars, or clean air.

And no more can you stand erect. You lose that heritage of man too. You are brought now to fit earth's intestines, stoop like a hunchback underneath, crawl like a child, do your man's work lying on your side, stretched and tense as a corpse.

The rats shall be your birds, and the rocks plopping in the water, your music. And death shall be your wife, who woos you in the brief moments when coal leaps from a bursting side, when a crosspiece falls and barely misses your head, when you barely catch the ladder to bring you up out of the hole you are dynamiting.

Breathe and lift your face to the night, Andy Kvaternick. Trying so vainly in some inarticulate way to purge your bosom of the coal dust. Your father had dreams. You too, like all boys, had dreams, vague dreams of freedom and light and cheering throngs, and happiness. The earth will take these too. You will leave them in, to replace the coal, to bear up the roof instead of the pillar the super ordered you to rob. Earth sucks you in, to spew out the coal, to make a few fat bellies fatter. Earth takes your dreams, that a few may languidly lie on couches and trill, "How exquisite," to paid dreamers.

Someday, the bowels will grow monstrous and swollen with these old tired dreams, swell and break, and strong fists batter the fat bellies, and skeletons of starved children batter the fat bellies, and perhaps you will be slugged by a thug hired by the fat bellies, Andy Kvaternick, or perhaps death will take you to bed, or you will strangle with the old crony of miners, the asthma.

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But walk in the night now, Andy Kvaternick, lift your face to the night, and desperately, like an almost drowned man, breathe and breathe. "Andy," they are calling to you, in their lusty voices, your fellow workers; it is an old story to them now, and they are strong men. "Have a drink on us?" The stuff burns down your throat, the thoughts lay shipwrecked and very still far underneath the black sea of your mind, you are gay and brave, knowing that you can never breathe the dust out. You have taken your man's burden, and you have the miner's only friend that earth gives to her children, strong drink, Andy Kvaternick.)

For several weeks Jim Holbrook had been in evil mood. The whole household walked in terror, he had nothing but heavy blows, for the children and he struck Anna too often to remember. Every payday he clumped home, washed, went to town, and returned hours later, dead drunk. Once Anna had questioned him timidly, concerning his work; he struck her on the mouth with a bellow of "Shut your damn trap."

Anna too became bitter and brutal. If one of the children was in her way, if they did not obey her instantly, she would beat them, as if it were some devil she were exorcising, in a blind rage. Afterwards, in the midst of her drudgery, regret would cramp at her heart at the memory of the tear stained little faces, "twasn't them I was beating up, something just seems to get into me, when I have something to hit."

Friday came again. Jim returned with his pay, part money, most company scrip. Little Will, in high spirits, ran to meet him, not noticing his father's sullen face. Pulling on his pants, Willie begged for a ghost story of the mine. He got a clout on the head that sent him sprawling. "Keep your damn brats from under my feet," he threatened in a violent rage, while Anna only stared at him, almost paralyzed, "and stop looking at me like a stuck pig."

The light from the dusk came in, cold, malignant. Anna sat in the half dark by the window, her head bent over the sewing. Willie huddled against her skirt, whimpering. Outside the wind gibbered and moaned. The room was suddenly chill. Some horror, some sense of evil, seemed over everything. It came to Mazie like dark juices of undefined pain, pouring into her, filling her heart in her breast, till it felt big, like the world. Fear came that her heart would push itself out, roll out like a ball. She clutched the baby closer to her, tight, tight, to hold the swollen thing, inside. Her dad stood in the washtub, nude, splashing water on his big, chunky body. The menacing light was on him, too. Fear for him came to Mazie, yet some alien sweetness mixed with it, watching him there.

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"I would be a cryen," she whispered to herself, "but all the tears is stuck inside me. All the world is a cryen, and I don't know for why. And the ghosts may get daddy. Now he's goen away, but he'll come back, with somethin sweet but sicklike hangin on his breath, and hit momma, and start the baby a bawlen. All the world, and I don't know for why. If it was all a dream, if I could just wake up and daddy be smilin, and momma laughing, and us playing. All the world a cryen. . . . Mebbe daddy'll know why, he knows everything." Some huge question rose in her, impossible to express, too huge to understand. She ached with the question. "I'll ask daddy." The desire came to ask him, to force him into some recognition of her place, her desire, her emotions.

As Jim Holbrook strode down the dirt street, he heard a fine patter, patter, and a thin "Pop." He wheeled. It was Mazie.

"You little brat," he said, the anger he had felt still smouldering in him. "What're you running away from home for. Get back or I'll skin you alive."

She came toward him, half cringing. "Pop, lemme go with you. Pop, I wanna know, what . . . . what makes people a cryen. Why don't you tell us ghost stories no more, Pop? . . . " The first words had tumbled out, but now a silence came. "Don't send me home, pop."

The rough retort Jim Holbrook had meant to make vanished before the undersized figure of Mazie, outlined so clearly against the cold sunset. In some vague way the questions hurt him. "What call's a kid got," he thought, "asking questions like that." Though the cramp in his back from working, lying on his side all day, shot through him like hot needles, he stopped and took her hand.

"Don't worry your head about those things. Wait'll you grow up."

Pop, you said there was ghosts in the mine, black, not white, so's you couldn't see them. And they chased a feller, and then when they got 'em, they laughed, but people think it's just the whistle. Pop, they wouldn't chase you, would they?" The fear was out at least.

"Why," chuckled Jim, "I'd just throw 'em over my shoulder, like this." He lifted her, swung her over his shoulder, set her down. "My right shoulder, or it wouldn't work. And then I'd pin 'em down with the crossbar. Now, how 'd you like to ride to town on poppa's horse and buggy and get served with a sucker."

Mazie smiled, but her heart was still sad. "Pop, does the boss man honest have a white shiny tub bigger than you too was in, and he turns somethin' and the water comes out? Or is it a story? And does he honest have a toilet right inside the house? And silks on the floor?" She held her breath.

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"Sure, Mazie. And they eat on white tablecloths, a new one, every night."

"How come he ain't livin like we do, how come we ain't livin like him, Pop?"

Why indeed. For a moment, Jim was puzzled. "Cause he's a coal operator, that's why."

"Oh," another wall of things not understood gone up. Something made the difference. A big word. Like what happened to Miss' Tikas when she was cut up. But how could he cut up a mine, his knife would have to be awful big.

"Pop, you could lick him, couldn't you. Couldn't you lick anybody?"

"Sure." He launched into an elaborate story of three dogs fought, each big as a horse, and, quite happy at the child's excited face, finished triumphantly, "Now, do you think anybody could lick your daddy?"

"Pop, I can make the bacon when I stand up on the box, and I can wash the baby, honest. Pop, momma sez I'm gonna get a edjiccation, and my hands be white. Is that a story, Pop?"

Fillin' the kids head with fool ideas, he thought wrathfully. But she could become a teacher. Smart rascal. Guess she gets it from Anna's kike blood. Then aloud. "Sure you are. You'll go to college, and read books, and marry a—" his stomach revolted at the thought of a mine boss "—a doctor." "And," he finished, "eat on white tablecloths."

She trotted along. Somehow the question she had meant to have answered could not be clamped into words. They reached the one street. Her dad went into the company store to buy her a sucker. Afterwards, when he went into the saloon, she slipped out to the culm bank that rose like an enormous black mountain at the end of the street. One side was on fire, and weird gorgeous colors flamed from it. The colors swirled against the night, reds and blues, oranges and yellows. "Like babies' tongues reachin out to you. Like what happens to the back of your eyes when you close 'em after seein the sun, only that hurts. Like all the world come a colored," she whispered softly to herself. "Mazie Holbrook is a watchin you," she whispered, "purty tongues." And gently, gently, the hard swollen lump of tears melted into a swell of wonder and awe.

It was cold and damp. Mazie shivered a little, but the shiver was pleasant. The wind came from the north, flinging fine bits of the coal dust from the culm against her face; they stung. Somehow it reminded her of the rough hand of her father when he caressed her, hurting her, but not knowing it, hurting with a pleasant hurt.

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TO OTTO BAUER

Go Bauer praise their patience now
Walk in the ruined gardens of the Karl Marx Hof
Speak to these dead speak to them now
Next year this court may blossom iron trees
Flowers of steel spring up to trim the future lawns
Old corpses underground the Heimwehr plants
Next Spring may rise as shrubberies of bone.
But Spring can wait. These dead belong to February alone.

Listen. Beyond the waltztime river the city glows
Ascend your ministerial balcony again
Apologize to all these gentlemen
The shopkeepers forced to shut their shops four days
The ruined business in the street cafes
Her ladyship disturbed the maid in tears
Assure her she can wear her jewelery tonight
Then right the chairs and calm the chandeliers.
Behind the last of windows the last sniper falls
The trolleys run the provinces subdued new order reigns
Except for that routine the dark night hides—
The quick and muffled hangings in the prison yards
And here—the burials with black holes through their brains.

Yes, Bauer, Austria has need of you
The speculator businessman the summer bride
The daughter in the private school the dancing master
The lovers in the drawing rooms the cupids carved in plaster
The president of banks the little Richelieu
Who juggles class and state—have need of you.
But not these dead, not Florisdorf, not Linz, not Steyr,
Not the women with drawn faces, not the men with fire
In their unbeaten eyes, not these,

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Who walk upon their feet, Bauer, not upon their knees.
They are not crushed, Bauer. The corpse upon the barricade—
Behold! is that of the betrayer not the betrayed!
The feet that dangled when the trapdoor clanged
Behold! is of the hangsman not the hanged!

In the ruined gardens of the Karl Marx Hof
These dead keep here their final discipline,
The iron front, the last republican defense,
That Heimwehr bullets now have locked them in.
No proclamations on the city's walls repeal,
No parliament can outlaw or suppress,
These unions of the dead, these cadres formed by steel.
You taught them patience, Bauer, to wait, wait,
Until the clock was over-run, the time long past,
Until the hour when they struck, they struck too late.
But in the end these sightless eyes saw clear
Upon the barricade before the machine gun belt ran dry
In that huge moment, in the hot and reeking hour,
They knew at last how gun and hand grenade
Prepare the last great pathway into power!

All honor to them, Bauer! For you
History prepares a shameful grave
A nameless spot buried under weeds and stones
Where creeping jackals shall come down to howl
Stirred by an ancient kinship with those bones!
But they—they sleep with Communards,
Their brother Spartacists lie at their side,
They marched forth Social Democrats but Bolsheviks they died!

ALFRED HAYES

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THEODORE ROOSEVELT HYMAN

Isidor Schneider

FROM A DISTANCE, traversing many roofs, and the roaring "El" hurdling many tumults, even the ape-chested cry of Loud Moe, the pickle peddler who refused to become mute for patriotism, the sounds of the victory parade arrived. They came in great breaths, in gigantic beats, as if somewhere an enormous, mad clock were loose. A "peaceful" people was greeting, with yelping cheers, its victorious soldiers, returned from a "hallowed war." The brass band played as if they were blowing through musical cannon. Through the cheering and the march music a particularly good ear could hear, or imagine itself hear the hoof beats of cavalry. For Teddy Roosevelt's rough riders were parading, prancing by on their famous big horses, nodding to the cheering crowds from under their big hats, flashing their broad bladed sabres. And the howling multitude, dense upon the rim of the sidewalk, supped, as at an enormous dish, on glory and blood.

Though they could not be at the parade, though little enough of the excitement that crazed New York, could get into the Hyman's household, there were, nevertheless, some throbs of it in the atmosphere, enough to give special point to the little drama that was agitating the household. A child was being born, at the same time that the American Empire was, more lavishly, being born. And wherever on that day a child was born the family had an especial sense of increase. Within their own circles, they felt America become enlarged.

In the houses of birth women cried out, and were heard; and murmuring voices consoled them, and affectionate hands soothed them, and after the deepest moan, the cries were forgotten and there were sounds of joy. But as the empire was being born, there were cries in Cuba and Spain and Porto Rico and the Phillippines, and even in the United States. Cries of bereaved parents, of the poor and oppressed; cries that were not so soon stilled and forgotton, and grew heavier. An empire is born not as the outgrowth of the strength and maturity of a parent, as a child is born, but out of the misfortune and weakness of other nations and upon their bodies and empire is born a parasite.

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But no one thought of that in the Hyman's household or in any other household. Gallant little Cuba was freed, for a moment. And providence had chosen to reward chivalrous America with Empire in the Caribbean and in the South Seas. Let Americans sing and jubilate in the time of joy and of increase.

The child that had so tormented Sarah on the voyage across the Atlantic came forth with easy labor. It was a boy. There were many relatives and neighbors to welcome him. He gave his own, unseemly salute to the world. Isaac and Samuel, kept by a door and the backs of many elders from the scene of the delivery, were told that it was a boy and they would have a fine party, a *brith,* with raisins and almonds to eat, and wine to drink. Then, they waited for a lull to hear the voice of their brother, and they heard a strong cry that, for a long time, would be their brother to them, in only one of numerous forms of burden and nuisance. And they heard the elders congratulate their father. "A father of many sons," they said admiringly.

Morris himself broke from out the ring of adults, and came rather shyly to Samuel and Isaac, caressed them, and said, "Children, rejoice you have a brother," and seeing that their father was weeping with joy, they wept.

Morris turned around, covered his head and muttered a formula of thanksgiving.

The guests laughed. Nervous Joe broke out of the crowd behind Morris wiping away as if he were trying to wipe the twitches from his face. He had a brandy bottle in his hand, took a gulp, staggered around and clapped the nearest back.

"Neighbor, I am another uncle," he shouted. Then stamping over to Samuel and Isaac, he surveyed them proudly, his empire of nephews. "Nu, so I am another uncle," and bent down, took them up in his skinny arms, against his skinny breast. He splashed wet, lavish kisses on their cheeks.

Harry, the ironist, taking a stand nearby shouted derisively after him. "Nu, so he's another uncle of what—of nephews who'll spit in his face when they grow up and tell him, get out of here, greenhorn!"

But no one listened to Harry now, laughed or got angry. He tried again. "Why don't they welcome the tom-cat on the back fence who will destroy their sleep even better,"—but was again unheard.

"What are they so gay about. They should weep for the brat. Some day the government will make a rough-rider out of him, too, put him on a horse where the bullets can find him easily."

This Rebecca heard and she flashed him a look of indignant anger.

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The look pleased Harry, who grinned. In his courtship of Rebecca he used many tricks.

To cover up Harry's remark, which no one else had heeded, Rebecca said, "At last we have a yellow in the house."

"A yellow? A president!" exclaimed the midwife who now began her labors of flattery to earn the collection that would be made for her at the Brith. "Ah, my friends, I have delivered hundreds of children in my days. Everyone here knows my reputation, and no pregnant woman in this neighborhood feels satisfied unless she can arrange to have me at her confinement. And I tell you of all the hundreds of infants I have delivered, I have not seen a handsomer and more intelligent looking child. I tell you my friends, the Hymans are fortunate people; for that child is a phenomenon. I can say so right now. He has a brilliant future before him; look at him anybody and deny it; a president. I'm telling you, the first little Jew in the White House and God be my witness to it."

"A toast to the president," said one of the guests, and gulped from the whiskey bottle.

"And what will his name be?" asked another. "A president should have something out of the ordinary, a fine sounding name, no common Izzys and Sammys and Bens, and Moes and Joes. So, tell me, what's going to be his name?"

"The name will be Torra," whispered Rebecca. The day of the formal name giving was not yet come, but all the family intimates knew that it was the turn of Tobias, among the dead ancestors, to have his name renewed.

"Torra, Tovia," screamed out one of the guests. "Why, its the perfect name! Who could want a better one. In English you make it, Teddy, like Teddy Roosevelt.

The room became a bedlam of congratulations. What could be more inspiringly apt than Teddy's name for the child born when the great Teddy was parading nearby, at the head of his Rough Riders come home from conniving an empire in Cuba.

"But why only Teddy?" someone insisted, "In rich America, we even prosper in names. Who is contented with only one nowadays? So why not let him have two. He should have the full name, Teddy Roosevelt Hyman. That's a name to be proud! That's a name that means business."

The amendment was cheered. The acclamations filled the house. Mr. Hyman was almost delirious with joy and pride. Such a name! It would be a charm! And as it was certain that Teddy Roosevelt would be a president, why not his little namesake, born on the day of his triumph?

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President Teddy Roosevelt Hyman? Why not? A jew had been prime minister in England; and the prime minister was greater than a king. A president? Let it be laughed at, let it be a jest today. It had happened, often enough, that the jest of one day become the reality of another. And in America, rich expanding America, was anything impossible?

The brandy bottle passed from hand to hand, was emptied, refilled, emptied, refilled again. The heaps of nut cakes in the plates were reduced to layers of crumbs. The crowd began to drift away. One of the great days in the lives of the Hymans was over; soon there would be the *brith;* then the decline into the humdrum. But not altogether. The swelling consciousness of strength continued and grew. The Nation was expanding and its atoms, with it. Prices went up, hopes sent up, the nation was soon to reach down to Panama and stretch beyond and cross its legs on the Andes. And business would swell into trusts and America would adopt an international swagger. And in almost evey household, in spite of poverty and torment and insecurity, there would be a spasm of the imperial consciousness. From the marble offices in Washington it would be radiated into all the households, schoolrooms, and workshops of the land. For most it would be a hope only; but to a few it would be a reality; and they would seize and gather in and bloat their possessions into incalculable fortunes.

And nowhere was this hope stronger than in the slums, where immigrants, moving into a new world, found it in motion, found it to be a world in the process of enlargement.

In the Hymans' household the added child proved just enough to burst the old tightness. Joseph soon got over his glory of being another uncle. He boarded where he could get some sleep. And Harry went elsewhere, cunningly deciding that he would fare better with Rebecca if he could oblige her to see him sometimes, outside the house.

Only Rebecca remained and she, out of a sense of duty, to help Sarah, who remained unaccountably weak after her delivery. The house should have felt roomier, but even were Sarah and Morris left alone there, they would have felt cramped. For now, their new sense of well-being demanded a new setting. They were not contented with their nooks in the slum.

One Sunday Morris stayed away the entire afternoon. When he returned in the evening his eyes were elated with excitement. He had rented a new apartment in Harlem. Harlem was roomy and clean. There were great stretches of empty lots. There was grass on the ground to be seen from the sidewalk, from one's window. The air was clean. It was almost like being in the country. The house itself was new; you

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could still smell the plaster and the paint. The apartment was crowded with new conveniences. There was running water, not only in the sink, but in a wash stand in the toilet, which was a flush toilet, and inside the apartment. In the kitchen there was a bathtub where one could also bathe. They would get new furniture. They would put down linoleum on the floor. And if God willed to continue his blessings they might some day be able to put down carpets and rugs. Then indeed they would be living at the level of the rich.

The Hymans were not alone in their departure form the slums. They were drops in a human tide that was rolling upward from the lower East Side into Harlem, that was soon to continue up into the Bronx, and was to create, in both places, other slums. For the bath tubs in the kitchen and the indoor toilet, they paid in reduced backyard space. The neighborhood would soon crowd up, fester into a slum; and then new emigrations would be made into Brooklyn and Queens and the outer parts of the Bronx; and in time new slums would be created, electric lit steam-heated slums, in small rooms, low ceilings and shoe box back yards, in which not even the Ailanthus tree, hardy as the surviving slum child, could breathe and live.

But through all this movement and expansion and hope men felt themselves to be wanderers in social range as in space; unfixed, not members of determinate classes. The difference between the rich and poor were known, were realities too great to evade; but as yet, they spurred the poor only to hope for riches, to deny with hysterical revulsion, their own class, their own destiny.

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HOMELESS BUT NOT MOTHERLESS

(*Variation on a theme by* L. KWITKO)

1.

As the blood mingles with the pure liquid—
the air of a fresh spring
with the slogan ALL WAR FUNDS TO THE UNEMPLOYED
the earth renews itself to me

in the glare of spring and hunger
no footsteps halt in corridors in basement rooms
I swing a rope around the continent's neck
and jump a freight to tell the boys
the things I know

the eyes like falcons rove the prairieland
unnerve the tightlipped people in their towns
Perhaps on some windswept crossing
I'll spot a woman of young years
who lifting my quivering life with her teeth
will carry if off beyond the mountains

2.

On a speeding train I sighted my mother
dozing wrapped in her shabby coat
leaning her furrowed cheek against a stranger's shoulder
with the sun burrowing in her great ear

the locomotive's shriek
startles the lonely roads where the local boys
park their cars in the swoonlight
A fragment of her hotcha smile
flashes from the movie sign
across the tracks The light fades with mother's deep sigh
her image a live coal in the
skull

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3.

At midday I swerved aside
to let the garbage truck pass with much rumbling
when outside a jewelry shop I saw my mother standing
munching dry bread in great haste

from nowhere to nowhere she wanders
homeless and gray as dust
while in the show window
a tiara of diamonds
multiplies the climax of the narrative

she looked up
and she saw you bet
her hair a lovesong of the Nile
a 19 year old eyefiller from the Ziegfeld ranks
entering the shop on his arm
to forge the metaphysic of dividends

4.

In the city in the park in the city park
a fountain is playing
without benefit of policemen or finer emotions

boats and swans rest in crested slumber
the sun a real one
the afternoon an old-fashioned plank over the drowsy pond
Wide open the cage of the sky
all the clouds have flown

mother and I breathe the air
closing our eyes like swans
cradled in clean serenity
reposing in the dovecote of world luster

a rustle in the air
PLOP a stone hits the water
"Ouch what a stink" mother cries
two bourgeois toddle by

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two exquisite plenipotentiaries
two corpulent asses
though one bourgeois stinks plenty too—

5.

Mother and I quit the city
and now we walk in the grass
strewn with piles of rags and glass
of broken bottles

poor people dip for scraps of food
licking their chapped lips, scratching their chests
On the wide road cleaving the grass
get the laff
Boys
business men drive by in fast procession
their eyes sewn up in livid bags
their cars new, humming with sole integrity

poor people stop to gaze with cold eyes
afterwards they stretch out in the grass
turning their backs on the shiny limousines

Mother quickens her pace and
I smiling easily keep up with her
It is time to leave off the beaten path
the old path—
Clearly I say
as mother moves besides me like a horse in clover
it is time it is time—
not backward and downward she laughs like a cannon shot
but forward and upward I roar.

PHILIP RAHV

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DEATH OF A GERMAN SEAMAN

Leon Dennen

1. *Hans Maurmeyer—*

All I know about Hans Maurmeyer's childhood is that he was born in Altona, the workers' section of Hamburg, in one of those dark and narrow alley-streets that are forever crowded by the cheaper grade of prostitutes and by houses that make one think of some ancient catacombs. His mother died when he was three years old. His father, a longshoreman, was killed during the general strike in Hamburg in 1918.

Hans was twenty-one years old when I first met him on the *City of Baltimore* where we had both worked as firemen. He had then been going to sea for seven years.

I still remember our first meeting; we had just left Baltimore when something went wrong with a boiler. I was on watch and it was my duty to go into the boiler and fix it. I crawled inside. The boiler was as hot as I imagine only hell can be. I couldn't stand the heat and immediately emerged. The first assistant engineer looked at me with disgust.

"All right," he said turning to Hans, "it seems that the college boy is too fancy for the job, you go and see what you can do with it."

This was the first time that I noticed Hans. He was a short, broad-shouldered fellow; a bald spot, like a rabbi's skullcap encircled the tip of his oblong head.

I had to help him get inside the boiler. He remained there for what seemed to me an unusually long time. Three minutes elapsed: I thought that he had already suffocated when I saw his shining bald spot emerge on the surface.

"How is it, Shorty?" the first assistant asked.

"Gut," he lisped in reply, "Fery gut, ganz gut."

The First patted him on the shoulder and I at once made up my mind that Hans was a fool. In fact, as I later found out, most of the crew considered him a goodnatured simpleton.

During the long winter nights when the boat would rock to the strains of a Strauss Waltz coming from the passengers' salon, one of our chief amusements would be to sit in the messroom and poke fun at Hans.

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He had one idiosyncrasy—a passion for stuffing his pockets with newspapers in various languages—which none of us could quite make out. We all knew, of course, that Shorty could read nothing but German. When we would get tired of teasing him about Lizzle, the little prostitute whom he picked up on the Hamburg water-front and with whom every one of us claimed to have slept, we would begin with the newspapers.

"Shorty," I would say, "what's the good news in the Paris Le Matin?"

Invariably he would produce the paper, spread it on the table and say: "Here, you vont to read?"

In a moment everyone would become interested to find out what the Frenchies had to say.

2. *Slim—*

This was my last trip on the *City of Baltimore* and I had not seen Hans for three years. I met him again in Hamburg in the month of March, 1933.

A group of us, stranded American seamen, were sitting at the seamen's quarters of the American consulate, waiting for a chance to ship back to the States.

It was a beautiful, typically Hamburg, day in March. Spring was already in the air. From the fifth floor of the consulate where the Consul's window faced the fashionable *Alsterdam strasse,* one could see the thawing *Alster* lake. In the basement, however—the seamen's quarters—where we had been waiting for days, it was as usual dark and dense with smoke. I say days! Some of us had been waiting there for months. We had lost all hope of ever getting out of that hole. Shipping was getting worse and worse.

Those were uneventful days for us. There was little we could do during the day except smoke, brood, or chew the rag. But in the evening we would go down to *St. Pauli,* parade the brightly lit *Grosse Freiheit,* and finish up the evening with a girl at the *Indra.* Next day we would amuse ourselves by relating to each other our previous night's experience.

It happened on the fifth of March. I remember the date because on that day every one in Hamburg was excited about the forthcoming elections of a new Reichskanzler. Outwardly Hamburg was calm and peaceful. It was, however, a superficial calmness. The atmosphere was tense. Every one was expecting trouble.

Slim, who had just quit a job as an oiler on one of the United States Lines' boats, was relating with much gusto how he threw a prostitute

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down the stairs because she refused to take a United Cigar Store's coupon for a dollar.

Slim was a curious fellow. I remember him when he was a gay, happy-go-lucky-seaman. He changed entirely ever since he returned from a round-the-world cruise and found his wife pumped full. How he hated women! The cruelties to which he subjected the Hamburg prostitutes are beyond description.

At times when I looked close at Slim's colorless eyes set deep into his protruding forehead; when I watched him rapping nervously on the table with his long tobacco-stained fingers, I thought he was mad.

Of course, not one of us approved of Slim's deeds. We didn't say anything because it would have resulted in a bloody fight. Only Hans, who entered the room unobserved, smacked his lips and shook his head disapprovingly:

"It's a mean trick to do, Slim," he said quietly, "it's a lousy trick."

Slim looked ferociously at him with his colorless eyes. We thought there would be a massacre. But not even the half-crazed Slim would think of harming the little funny German.

"All right, Shorty," he said after an awkward moment of silence, "all right. It's none of your business and don't butt in on such things, or I'll teli Lizzie on you. *Wie geht's* otherwise?"

"Fery gut, Slim. And how's things vit you? Haf you get a job already?"

I could see that Slim was amused.

"Go on, Shorty," he said, "don't kid me. What do I want a job for? There is plenty of whores in Hamburg, right? Well, I've decided to go in for pimpin'. More money in that."

"It's a bad pizzness, Slim. And everybody has no more money these days."

Slim was now on his favorite topic:

"Is that so," he shouted, banging on the table with his tobacco-stained fingers, "is that so! Just listen to the little Dutchman. Just listen to him. You think if the Huns are broke the whole world is broke. How about the United States, Heiny? You think I am goin' to run a whorehouse for lousy Dutchmen? No sir, it's goin' to be for American tourists and sailors exclusively."

"Zo-o," replied Hans, his narrow brown eyes twinkling ironically, "zo," he said, "you think it is gut in America. . . . Haf you read about another bik bank in New York going zum teufel? Haf you read, eh? Here, you vont to read . . . . "

He took out from his hip pocket a Paris edition of the New York

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Herald and spread it on the table. In a moment both Slim and the Hamburg whores were forgotten. Everyone was reading the bad news from the States.

3. *Enemies—*

"Curly," Hans said to me in the evening, as I was leaving the consulate, "where are you staying tonight?"

"At the Hyman Warburg Foundation," I said, "the Jewish immigrant house on Rottenburgsort."

"Could I sleep over there tonight?"

There was a worried expression on Hans' face. Still I could not refrain from kidding him.

"What's the matter, Shorty," I asked, "did Lizzie throw you out?"

"Stop joking, Curly," he replied quietly.

I looked at Hans in amazement. I never knew him to object to being kidded. I looked at Hans and realized that something out of the ordinary must have happened to him. My suspicion was confirmed on our way to the Warburg Foundation.

To go from Alsterdam Strasse to Rottenburgsort, we had to pass through the *Haupt Bahnhoff*. I always liked the *Bahnhoff*. Next to *St. Pauli* it was the liveliest place in Hamburg. As usual, there was a strong commotion inside the *Bahnhoff*. It was crowded to capacity. In a corner a middle-aged man was selling the *Völkischer Beobachter*. "Heil Hitler," he cried offering the passers-by the newspapers. Suddenly Hans stopped dead. For a minute, as though paralyzed, he stood gazing at the man. "Heil Hitler," the latter cried giving us a paper. His eyes met Hans' and the *Völkischer Beobachter* fell out of his hands.

"Dog," said Hans to the newsdealer, "you too sold yourself."

"I had nothing to eat," the man replied faintly.

"I have nothing to eat too."

"I have a wife and child."

"So you are going to shoot at me?"

The newsdealer was silent. Hans pulled me by the sleeve and we went on.

4. *Schnazel—*

When we reached the Foundation it was already dark. Some of the men—unemployed German Jews, Jews without a country, deserters from

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the armies of Poland, Rumania and Hungary—were eating soup and conversing quietly.

In a corner old Schnazel sat murmuring to himself. He was only forty-five years old, although he looked like a man of seventy. He had gray hair and a white, tobacco-stained beard. I was told that during the World War he was wounded six times. As a result he lost his mind as well as his nose, which, like a flat piece of chopped flesh was pasted to his face. The snot was constantly running down his beard and into the soup.

In spite of repeated attempts to start a conversation with Schnazel, there were only two sentences I could get out of him: "St. Bartholomews' Night" and "They must not win . . . . " On every occasion he would repeat them to me. Perhaps they had some connection with his experiences during the war. Perhaps Schnazel was conscious of what he was saying. That night, to be sure, his words sounded to me like a horrible prophecy.

5. *Herr Silberstadt—*

After supper, Herr Silberstadt, the manager of the Foundation, came in to inspect us. He did that every night after he had finished reading the Talmud.

Herr Silberstadt was a short plump Jew with a silvery Van Dyke beard and gold-rimmed spectacles stuck on his hooked nose. He wore a black silk skullcap and bedroom slippers.

He stood in the doorway and looked at us contemptuously. His gaze stopped on Hans.

"Whence does the Jew come from?" Herr Silberstadt asked Hans in his velvety sing-song voice.

"He is a friend of mine," I replied, "a German seaman."

"Ich bin kein Jude," interjected Hans.

"Kein Jude . . . . " said Silberstadt, "zo-o . . . . Don't you see, my friend, that we have enough Jewish bums to feed here?"

"He is only going to stay here one night," I said.

Here something strange happened. Hans walked slowly over to Silberstadt and shook his fist in the plump man's face. The latter turned pale and began to move backwards.

"They are not bums . . . . ," Hans lisped, "I am not a bum . . . . I am . . . . "

"Heraus! . . . . Heraus! . . . . " Silberstadt began to shriek moving towards the door. *"Heraus! . . . . "* Flapping with his slippers he ran out into the streets to call a policeman.

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When he returned a few minutes later with a young newly-ordained Nazi cop, Hans had already disappeared into the night.

6. *St. Bartholomew's Night—*

I shall never forget that night. Beyond the windows, like the stamping of horses' hoofs, resounded the marching steps of nailed boots. They disturbed the tranquility of peaceful Hamburg. Towards midnight the stamping grew louder. The Bahnhoff clock struck twelve. Suddenly wild shrieks of hurrahs pierced the quiet night. Schnazel had a fit. I ran upstairs for water. When I returned he had already regained consciousness. He blue lips were whispering: St. Barthlomew's night." The stamping grew louder and louder. Now we could distinguish shrieks of despair. Cries of "Heil Hitler" intermingled with the crash of breaking glass . . . .

7. *The Death of Hans—*

In the morning devastation stared us in the face. Oberman's bakery, where only the previous night I bought bread, was completely destroyed. Pieces of a smashed door were scattered about the sidewalk. The windows were broken. Here and there one could see pale faces peeping through windows. Otherwise the streets were completely deserted.

I made my way to *Mönckenbergstrasse,* the main street in Hamburg. Here it was much livelier. Groups of stormtroopers were closing Jewish stores. A young farm-boy with pink cheeks, dressed in a brown uniform, was leading a Jew by a rope. A sign, inscribed in red letters: "I am a Jew and a traitor," was suspended by two strings from the Jew's neck.

Among the throng watching the Jew and the Nazi, I found Slim. Together we wandered through the streets of Hamburg. We passed the deserted Rathhause, the Nazi headquarters—the Brown House—filled with armed stormtroopers, and made our way to Altona.

In front of the huge statue of Bismarck, towering majestically over *St. Pauli* and *Altona,* we were met by a group of armed civilians. They were shabbily dressed people. The majority of them wore sailor's dungarees. Their faces were grim and determined.

We cut across *Mittle strasse* and in front of Chassal's drygoods store we bumped into Hans.

"Look who is here," said Slim, "and holdin' a toy pistol in his hand, too. What's the matter, Shorty, goin' huntin'?"

Hans did not reply.

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"I'll be a son of a bitch," continued Slim, "The Heiny is sore about somethin'.' What's the matter, Shorty, did Lizzle leave you?"

Slowly and deliberately Hans went over closer to Slim and said quietly: "If you are a *dumkopf,* Slim, it is your pizziness. The time for joking is over."

Slim and myself went into the *"Lilliput"* to have a glass of beer. We had just sat down at the table when we heard the rattling of a machine gun. It rattled for a few minutes and stopped. There was a strong commotion outside of the cafe. We went out into the street; Several Brownshirts were running in disorder. A man was lying on the sidewalk, groaning. Some one was waiting. Some one was crying. We walked over to a group that gathered in front of Chassal's drygoods store; Shorty was lying on the sidewalk, gasping.

"What happened?" I asked a little shrivelled-up woman who was wringing her hands in despair.

"Weisst du nicht," she replied, *"weisst du nicht?* That is Hans, Hans Maurmeyer, the secretary of the Seaman's Union. The Nazi were going to destroy the Jewish stores in Altona, so our boys went out to protect them."

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QUEEN CITY OF THE ADIRONDACKS

Sender Garlin

MY FOLKS moved into that town in northern New York from Stonehill, on Lake Champlain, up in Vermont. We had come to Stonehill from New York City in 1906. A few months earlier, a bullet driven into my brother's body during a *pogrom* in Bialystock, sped the family across the Atlantic. Shortly after our arrival my father found work in an East Side bakery.

My father liked best to lie on a couch and read; he found that work in the cellar-bakeries on Forsyth Street in New York's East Side made him cough. That scared my mother, for two of his brothers had died of T.B. A friend told him of an "opportunity" up in Stonehill, Vermont, and so we traveled up there. It was a curious partnership with another man in which my father, mother and three brothers (the oldest was 12) worked to support the family of eight.

My folks left Stonehill in 1911 and came to Glendale where my father opened a bakeshop. Glendale, at the time, was a small industrial town in the Adirondack foothills. It was called the Queen City of the Adirondacks. It was a papermill town. During the spring months logs drifted down from the northern towns to be ground into pulp and then into paper by the workers of the International Paper Company in the gray-looking mills near the South Glendale bridge.

Only once did these workers get a half-holiday without having their pay cut. That was the day of the first Armistice celebration. The sirens in the three fire stations shrieked, the bells in the churches clanged, and everybody quit work and dashed out into the streets. We didn't go to school that afternoon. I stood before the news bulletin in front of the office of the Glendale *Times*, reading the latest news of the "Armistice."

The real Armistice didn't come off until the following Monday morning, the 11th of November. I guess we expected it, because I arranged with Louie, who was a sound sleeper and the son of the tailor (who boasted that he once fitted up a custom-made suit for State Senator Emerson) to waken him when I heard the sirens screeching at the West Street Firehouse. Neither Louie, who lived opposite us, nor I had a watch

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or an alarm clock, so we worked out a system: he tied a string onto his toe and threw it out of the third-story window of his house. I'd waken him by yanking on the string, which hung from his window.

It must have been about four o'clock in the morning when the sirens announced the end of the World War. I dressed and went out to pull the string dangling near the porch.

Half the town was already on the streets. I thought it would be a good idea if Louie and I could be at the head of a parade, so I phoned the leader of the Socialist Party local, Dan Linehan (a lanky cigarmaker who called himself a manufacturer because he employed one helper) and asked him if it would be O.K. for me and Louie to take the big bass drum out of the headquarters and use it to start an Armistice Day parade. D. V., as we in the local called him, said he couldn't see any "real objection" to it, provided we took good care of the bass drum, because "it was the property," he said, of the Socialist Band.

The Glendale *Times* was owned by an influential citizen named Addison G. Colbert, who also owned the Glendale Trust Company. I never did find out whether it was true or not, but some folks in town said that when Addison G. Colbert was state treasurer under Gov. Richards, some money disappeared.

The Glendale Trust Company was the bank on Glen Street, right opposite the Y.M.C.A. It had those glass-topped tables with fine ball-pointed pens where you filled out the deposit slips. This is the bank where my father got loans from time to time, provided he got some reliable business man to endorse a note for him. Once he got the lumber firm of Kendall & Green to endorse a promissory note for him so he could purchase lumber to build his bakery. After that, whenever my father saw Kendall on the street—even if Kendall was on the opposite side—he always doffed his cap and said, "Hello, Mr. Kendall and Green." It seems my father didn't realize it was the firm name.

Of course my father, who had read a good deal, knew that they were all a bunch of crooks, but he also knew they were powerful: they could decide whether to call in that "payable on demand" note of $100, so he always doffed his cap whenever he saw Mr. Kendall on the street.

The Socialist Band was quite a help to us in our work. The Prudential Insurance man, Gib Wendell, was the bandmaster. He didn't charge to train the band because, Gib said, there was no reason on God's green earth why anyone shouldn't learn to play a musical instrument in a couple of months, especially if he agreed with our ideals.

Whenever August Claessens, Steve Mahoney or Mary McVicker

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came to town, the band assembled at the headquarters of the local and paraded to Monument Square where the open-air meeting was scheduled—all the time playing the "Albania," a march with a real martial air. Sometimes as many as 75 or 100 followed us.

A lot of fellows around town even joined the Socialist local to get free lessons on the slide trombone or the cornet. A couple of fellows who worked at the Boston Confectionary experienced a sudden conversion to the cause, but as soon as they learned to play an E-flat clarinet they quit the party. Myself, I used to hold the bass drum while another comrade whacked on it. Gib Wendell promised that after a while I'd be promoted and get a chance to whack the drum, too.

But to come back to the Armistice Day parade. Louie and I went up to the Socialist local and carried the big bass drum down the steps. The headquarters were right above Fitzgerald's Chop House; the hallways always smelled of stale beer and fried oysters. It was still dark, and as soon as Louie and I hauled the drum down, I started whacking it. After a while it looked as if we had the whole town following us, for everybody was excited about the war being over.

We marched thru the streets: past the Glendale Trust Company and the Y.M.C.A., down South Street; past the City Hall. Everybody in the line of march seemed eager to follow our leadership. Suddenly we discovered that the people behind Louie and me had dropped out of the parade, then the folks right behind them, until after a while only Louie and I were celebrating the Armistice.

While it was still dark, the parade stretched behind us, but as it grew light the townspeople dropped out when they saw on the bass drum the words: *Workers of the world unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains!*

After the band escorted two or three out-of-town speakers to Monument Square at different times, we in the local became conscious of our rights as citizens in the community and taxpayers in the town. We elected a committee headed by D. V. Linehan to call upon the Common Council at the City Hall. The local wanted us to take up the question of getting a share of the 12 summer concerts for our own Socialist band. The contracts for these concerts usually alternated between the Glendale Band and the Elks Band. The musicians in these bands were dressed in natty blue uniforms, with golden whirlgigs on their coatsleeves; and they liked that. During the day some of them worked in Robinson's Hardware Store or Joubert's barbershop, and it felt good to have your friends see you in uniforms.

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The Common Council listened to our delegations because most of them were known in town to be men of sobriety who always paid their debts; several of the Socialists were even members of the Odd Fellows or Modern Woodmen of America. Before we left the City Hall we received the assurance of the Common Council that the Socialist Band would get four out of the regular twelve concerts scheduled for the summer. These concerts were given in the City Hall Park, and we'd always know the concert was on when we heard in the distance the strains of the "Star Spangled Banner," and we knew it was over when they played "Home Sweet Home."

When we forced the Common Council to give our Socialist band four of those Concerts, the folks in the local thought it proved what could be done when people stood up on their hind legs and demanded their rights as citizens. But when summer came we were in a jam, because our Socialist band could play only the "Albania." Gib Wendell, our bandmaster, had to hire the men in the Elks Band to play for us.

The folks in the local thought it was a step forward, anyhow, because Gib arranged for the Elks musician to wear the uniforms used by the members of the Socialist band. There was an arm and torch sewn on every one of those uniforms and Linehan, the cigar "manufacturer," thought it was a darn good way of putting our message over on the Henry Dubbs.

Linehan was tall and lean, and he always reminded me of Gene Debs. I heard Debs for the first time when I was about ten years old. He was on a nationwide lecture tour, and lots of people came to the county courthouse to hear him. There was no admission charge, but you had to buy a subscription to Debs' magazine, the *Rip-Saw*, to get in. It seemed to me that he bent his tall, lean body way over, as if he wanted every word to get right into the hearts of those listening to him. His speech was very eloquent—like those of Wendell Phillips that I had read. Debs began his speech by saying that "as the petals of a flower open up under the beneficent rays of the sun, so my heart opens up to to you, my dear friends."

We didn't have many mill workers in our local in Glendale. Many of the members also belonged to the Workmen's Circle, and some of them owned small dry-goods stores and grocery stores, but most of them were junk peddlers. A few of the well-to-do members had started business as pack peddlers. They used to travel by horse and wagon through the mountain towns of the Adirondacks. They sold cheap suits, sleazy dresses

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and paper-bottomed shoes to the *goyim,* and brought back skunk-furs which they sent down to Albany at a neat profit. When their sons graduated from high school, the fathers sent them to Union College in Schenectady—or, as one of the more prosperous skunk-dealers did—even to Harvard. Later the boys came home for vacation, and stood in front of the Y.M.C.A. on Glen Street, wearing their letters on their athletic sweaters, and eyeing, with a superior air, the high school seniors as they passed.

The junk peddlers couldn't make very much buying and selling waste paper, rubber and tin. Many of them were former sweatshop workers who had come to town with the consumptive flush already on their cheeks. They became junk peddlers even though they didn't have a cent to their name. The richer Jews who owned the junk shops advanced the sixty or seventy dollars needed to buy a spavined horse, a wagon and a set of harness; the newly-established junk peddler was, in turn, obliged to sell all the junk he collected to the junk dealer who had provided the horse and wagon.

Through a sort of a share-cropping system, the junk dealer got a fancy rate of compound interest on his investment. He never pressed the peddler for the original outlay. In this way he had a permanent claim on him.

When I was about 14, just about the time I became active in the Glendale Socialist local—and about the time the Socialists elected George R. Lunn as mayor of Schenectady, the General Electric town about 43 miles distance—just about this time I developed a hankering to be a fireman. Not that I yearned to get up out of a warm bed in zero weather to put out fires, but because I felt that if I were a fireman I'd have lots of time to read all those books and pamphlets which the fellows in the local were always talking about; those exciting books by Upton Sinclair; Kirkpatrick's *War, What For?;* Buchanan's *The Story of a Labor Agitator;* Debs' *Life, Letters and Speeches,* and all the vibrant copies of the *Appeal To Reason,* the *Rip-Saw,* and the illustrated *International Socialist Review.*

There were many fires in Glendale during the winter months. The fires always broke out shortly after midnight. One Friday night, my father took the whole family to the Empire Palace to see a movie about the murder trial of Police Lieut. Charles Becker, Lefty Louie, Dago Frank, and the other gangsters who were mixed up in the murder of the gambler, Rosenthal. A few minutes after we got home we heard two

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long whistles and four short ones, and my father said casually, "Well, there goes Stein's store." Of course my father had no advance information about the fire, but I guess he knew that Stein's business was on the blink.

The *Post-Star* next morning told about the damage caused by the blaze, reported that the place and the merchandise were "partly covered by insurance," and explained that the fire was of "unknown origin" or that it was caused by "spontaneous combustion." Some smiled cynically, but most of the decent citizens, and especially the business men, didn't say much because they were glad that a little more money was coming into the community from the outside.

Of course the people whose place burned down put on long faces before the neighbors, and wept about the awful calamity that had befallen them. But most everybody recognized this as a necessary ritual.

That winter one or two of the insurance companies threatened to cancel the policies in certain sections of Glendale unless these fires of "unknown origin" and "spontaneous combustion" stopped. On the whole, however, this activity was recognized as part of the legitimate business enterprise of the community.

So my boyhood passed in the Queen City of the Adirondacks. Every winter there were fires, and when a celebrity came to town the Socialist Band played the "Albania" march. The Socialist local dozed placidly through the years. When the papermill workers went out on strike the Socialists could not understand.

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POVERTY COMES TO THE KENNEDYS

1.

It came gradually, the solution first served
with starched napkin, tea,
the slice of lemon,
with the charming elegancies
of hysteria.
Of course some one must take
the guilt.
This the Kingdom Come.
With the first relinqusihing,
two meals a day, then one
with an occasional dinner at a friend's
the dry thanks of necessity.
And the words between them
less with each regression.
He cancelled his magazines
so that only the daily paper
was between them and
the separation of their minds.
They no longer saw each other
with eyes, only a heavyness
of displaced bodies.
The day they slept and the night
they slept
the dampness of a cold water flat
in their bones.
Their senses closed them in
and they finally sat
tight, apart,
their thoughts an endless
carousel of upmoving,

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downmoving faded horses
in motion of things past.

2.

The house leans lopsided on the grey moist walls
and in the basement the dust collects
on the soiled wash that waits in the laundry.
The four chinese close their black poppy eyes,
hold the hot irons to their cheeks
and forget to look out of the blurred window.

Each night
the house inters the hacking sound
as Mrs. Donatello in her damp bed
coughs on the bilge green walls.
each night
the black sinks deeper in her sockets
the bones emerge and lie lightly on the bed
each night
the walls creak at 4 A. M.
the cats prowl in the halls
the night sounds become the day's stridency
and in the morning Sr. Donatello turns over
and begets another child.

Gangrene rots slowly
and Mrs. Dante Pepe holds
in her blue veined fingers
the restless sheet, a white soiled
moth that stirs fretfully,
and complains her amputated leg hurts her.
Her blanched skeleton like ferns of twisted frost
waits restlessly the faint green odors
of a new carbolic spring.

3.

Cornelia,
that languorous, brown italian gem
lies as a street in dung heaps

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on the white snow.
And each repeated step becomes a repetition
that senses hard dry ice thru the soles,
that feels soft wet slush thru the soles.
The garbage is a cold damp smell
that smokes up the moon.
The Italians sit at the windows holding their chins
and watch
the horses slowly plod out of the Fiume stable.

4.

The night slides over the roofs
and REVOLUTION is held in pink sheets
headlined under glaring newsstand bulbs.

"AUSTRIAN WORKERS FIGHT"

This is the red, wild sharp flower
rising thru the white snow.

This is the red, cognac fire
muttering thru weakened blood.
This is for the Kennedys
this is for the Italians
this is for the deadlike peoples.
This is your Kingdom Come
Your will be done.

FANYA FOSS

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PROPAGANDA OR PARTISANSHIP?

Georg Lukacs

Abridged, and translated by Leonard F. Mins

MUCH MORE THAN A MATTER of mere terminology is involved in the question of whether proletarian literature is tendentious. We propose the term "partisanship" (instead of "tendency"[1] as one of its major characteristics in the belief that this term involves new theoretical insight into the nature of our literatur In so doing we are endeavoring to eliminate a web of theoretical misconceptions and half-truths from our literary viewpoint and to formulate the specific traits of our literature more clearly and unmistakably than has been done hitherto.

I.

What does the word "tendency" mean and how did it enter our literary terminology? To begin with, "tendency" may have several meanings. Marx defines it as "a law, the absolute fulfilment of which is retarded, checked or weakened by counteracting factors" (*Das Kapital,* Vol. III, Part 1, p. 215, 5th German edition). This meaning does not concern us here, but it is mentioned since it cannot be allowed to vanish from our terminology. The more important connotation, one closer to our problem, is "aim or endeavor." "Tendency" was widely used in this sense during the first half of the nineteenth century in governmental and police documents; censorship regulations and decrees suppressing certain books constantly refer to "seditious tendencies." It is significant that "tendency" was given a *subjective* connotation in these decrees.

I have been unable, unfortunately, to trace the evolution of the term

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[1]We are using the term "propaganda," as employed by the bourgeois opponents of proletarian literature, as the best contemporary American equivalent for *Tendenz* (or tendency), the word traditionally employed in Continental literary criticism. Hence "propaganda art" for "Tendenzkunst", and so forth. (Translator's note).

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from a phrase in police and judicial terminology to an esthetic one. (This development seems to have been largely German; the French tendency plays of the middle nineteenth century, for instance, were called "drames à thèse.") In 1841 Engels commented on the "tendency" in the work of the German romantic poet Arndt. One of Heinrich Heine's poems in his *Zeitgedichte* is called *Die Tendenz,* its last stanza reading:

> Blase, schmettre, donnre täglich,
> Bis der letzte Dränger flieht—
> Singe nur in dieser Richtung,
> Aber halte diese Dichtung
> Nur so allgemein als möglich.

Heine's ironical conclusion, written at a time when he was further removed from "pure art" than ever before or after, shows that, with a poet's fine instinct, he strongly disapproved of the nature of the "tendency art" of the time. In this poem (and in other of his comtemporary writings) he combatted the subjectivist, opinionated (and hence abstract and general) nature of "tendentious" literature. The social bases for this abstractness will be dealt with later.

An example, taken from another contemporary poet, who likewise viewed poetry as a weapon, justifies Heine's ironic comment. The German poets Georg Herwegh and Ferdinand Freiligrath engaged in a significant controversy over partisanship versus neutrality in poetry (in 1845).* Herwegh wrote:

> . . . Ein Schwert in euer Hand sei das Gedicht.
> O wählt ein Banner, und ich bin zufrieden,
> Obs auch ein andres, denn das meine sei . . .

Here we see Herwegh supporting partisanship *in general,* as against Freiligrath's view that "the poet stands above parties." Two aspects of Herwegh's position interest us here. First, he held the question of partisanship or neutrality [in later terminology: "propaganda" vs. "pure art"]

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*Georg Herwegh (1817-1875), German bourgeois revolutionary poet, took part in the 1848 Revolution at the head of a column of revolutionary troops. His major work is *Gedichte eines Lebenaigen* ("Poems of a Living Man"); some of his best-known revolutionary poetry is to be found in 1848: *Ein Lesebuch für Arbeiter.* Ferdinand Freiligrath (1810-1876), German post-Romantic poet and a political exile from Germany for many years, was one of the leading figures in the bourgeois-revolutionary school of writers.

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to be one for *subjective decision.* He did not see it as an ineluctable characteristic of all literature, as the product and the weapon of the class struggle. Secondly, he welcomed *all* partisanship—including one's opponent's—as a step forward; thus taking a *formal* view of the whole problem of partisanship.

We need not show at length how Herweigh's whole viewpoint is based upon *illusion.* But since every bourgeois theory for or against "tendentious art" is based more or less upon such illusions, it is worth mention and merits the foregoing brief analysis. We are less concerned with the disclosure of these illusions as such than in exposing their roots in bourgeois class existence. This is of some importance to us, as Franz Mehring's* basic formulations of this problem in proletarian-revolutionary literature were strongly influenced by bourgeois "tendency art." Nor was Mehring ever able to surmount the unresolved contradictions of the problem involved in its bourgeois formulation.

Obviously enough, proletarian literature, at its inception, derived from the "tendentious literature" written by and for the remnants of the progressive bourgeoisie; hence it took over the theory and practice of "tendency." For at its very beginnings it was forced to take the embattled position which this bourgeois literature had always held. "Tendency," it should be noted, is an extremely relative term. In bourgeois literary criticism any work whose class basis and class goal are hostile to the dominant school is called "tendentious"; one's own "tendency" is not "tendentious."

This hostility among the various literary factions of the bourgeoisie (with the politically and socially more progressive group usually accused, of course, of more "tendentious writing" than the reactionaries) was even more pronuonced towards the first beginnings of proletarian literature. Every portrayal of the social order, whether depicting the proletariat or the bourgeoisie, was called "tendentious" if done from the proletariat's class standpoint, and all the arguments that "tendency [or propaganda] art" was "inartistic" and "hostile to art" were paraded against it.

Under these circumstances it is quite understandable that embryon-

*Franz Mehring (died in 1919) was one of the major theoreticians of the pre-war German Social-Democracy and one of the leaders of its Left Wing. He organized, with Liebknecht and Luxemburg, the Spartakists, and was one of the founders of the Communist Party of Germany. Mehring wrote the standard biography of Marx, a major critical analysis of German literary history, *Die Lessing-Legende,* in addition to invaluable fundamental literary criticism scattered through the files of the *Neue Zeit,* the theoretical organ of the Social-Democracy.

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proletarian literature seized upon the stigma of "propaganda art" applied by its class enemies and nailed it to its mast as a term of honor—like the Dutch *Beggars* in the sixteenth century and the *sans-culottes* in the French Revolution. Moreover, bourgeois "pure art" was growing progressively poorer in content and increasingly remote from reality and therefore more and more tendentious itself, so that its condemnation of proletarian "propaganda art" became increasingly hypocritical. Hence for a long time we manifested a controversial pride in calling out literature "propaganda literature."

II.

But understanding how this theoretical position was arrived at is far from proof of its theoretical soundness. Together with the bourgeois statement of the problem and the bourgeois terminology, this standpoint uncritically accepts all of bourgeois eclecticism in the problem's formulation. It takes over the bourgeois-eclectic contradictions, which are not resolved but left either blurred or rigidly polarized. By the latter we mean the distinction between "pure art" and "tendency" [or "propaganda"]. Accepting the implied assumptions, two alternative answers can be made:

1. We are not interested in "pure art" or "perfection of form." Literature has a social function in the class struggle, which determines its *content;* we consciously perform this function and do not concern ourselves with decadent-bourgeois problems of form. (That is, restricting literature to day-by-day agitation: the standpoint of mechanical materialism n literary theory).

2. We acknowledge the existence of an "esthetics," and endeavor to oncile it with the "propaganda" arising from the "social" or the litical" field, i.e. from a field "foreign to art." In other words, we tically pose the insoluble problem of weaving a "non-artistic" conent into the work of art. Esthetic immanence, the "pure" artistic mogeneity of the work of art, i.e. the primacy of form over content, is citly) acknowledged. The demand is made, however, that expression given to a content ("propaganda") which is foreign to art—as this ory sees it. This gives rise to an eclectic idealism.

These unresolved contradictions—which are irresoluble under the regoing assumptions—were the cause of Franz Mehring's uncertainty on this point. Mehring accepted Kant's esthetics, which dominated the declining bourgeoisie's theory of art, as a theoretical foundation. The

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basic principle of this esthetic: "Zweckmässigkeit ohne Zweck," the exclusion of all "interest" from one's approach to art, is obviously a theory of "pure art." Schiller's extension of this theory: "the extirpation of content by form" (which Mehring adopted), merely accentuates this subjective-idealist tendency. Hence it was wholly consistent for the declining bourgeoisie's theory of art to use these views as weapons in the battle against "propaganda." [or "tendency"]. Its success was all the greater since the advocates of "propaganda art," who combatted this deduction, themselves accepted the underlying theory (with the exception of the proponents of an over-simplified mechanical materialism). They could make only inconsistent and eclectic efforts to refute the conclusions necessarily and inescapably deduced from this theory.

This failure is most strikingly evident in Mehring, the greatest German literary critic of the past generation, who towered far above his bourgeois contemporaries. Mehring's eclecticism was very clearly manifested in his inability to find any but an "either-or" solution to the central problem of form and content. Mehring felt that unconditional acceptance of the Kant-Schiller (subjective-idealist) solution necessarily led to acknowledgment of the "timelessness" of art, and hence to the primacy of form and the rejection of all "propaganda." Refusing to accept this conclusion (without criticizing its antecedent assumptions), he wrote: " . . . therefore taste *also* depends on content and not upon form *alone*" (Collected Works, Vol. II, p. 264, italics ours). This eclecticism, which gives an absolutely meaningless answer to the really fundamental question, shows how little Mehring had progressed beyond the Kant-Schiller statement of the underlying problem or beyond bourgeois esthetics in general.

The limitations of this viewpoint are evidenced when the problem of "propaganda" is posited as a problem of the relationship between art and morals. In other words, the subjective idealist nature of "propaganda" comes to the surface: "tendency" becomes a *demand,* a *summons,* an *ideal,* which the writer *contrasts* with reality. It is not the tendency of social development itself, made conscious (in Marx's sense) by the writer, but a (subjectively conceived) commandment, whose fulfilment is *demanded* of reality. Back of this statement of the problem we have the following considerations:

1. A rigid, circumscribed separation of the various fields of human activity, i.e. the ideological reflection of capitalistic division of labor, which is not analyzed and criticized Marxistically as an actuality, as the result of this same division of labor. On the contrary, it is conceived of (purely ideologically) as the "eternal" law

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of the separation of "essentials" and unhistorically made the starting point for all subsequent analyses.

2. Human activity, i.e. practice, is not taken in its actual, objective configuration, as concerned with material production and with the changing of the social order, but in its distorted, inverted, ideological reflection (as "morals"). Hence the distorted ideological conclusion (again unhistorically) must be converted into the theoretical starting point.
3. This contrast between arts and morals rests upon the uncritical-ideological illusion that the individual is an "atom" of society. It also involves the fetishist concept of society as something "corporeal," something that surrounds man as an "external" reality (the environmental theory), that is not the sum total, the system, and the result of human activity (although under capitalism this result is involuntary and unconscious).
4. The isolation of the work of art from social practice, material production and the class struggle—the concept of the aim of art as the realization of an "esthetic ideal"—corresponds to this rigid, mechanistic distinction between the individual and society, which underlies the whole bourgeois scheme of "morals."
5. From this same standpoint art and morals are not the results of *identical* social practice, but the realization of *different*, divergent, and diametrically opposed ideals ("interest" vs. "disinterestedness," as Kant puts it). What Hegel said of the undialectical concept of body and soul applies to the solution of the problem of literature and "propaganda" ("morals"):

> "In fact, if both are assumed to be *absolutely independent* of each other, they both become as impenetrable to each other as matter is assumed to be impenetrable to all other matter." (*"Enzyklopaedie,"* § 389).

Examine any of the writings or literary theories of the nineteenth century and it will be seen that none could escape the ineluctable consequences of this approach to the problem, which was necessarily conditioned by the social existence of the bourgeois class and, more especially, of the writer (fetishism and the like). There were but two alternatives: Either the writer deliberately abjured "propaganda" (this abjuration being merely illusory) and created "pure art," which resulted in a *tendentious* portrayal of reality; and hence "tendency literature" in the worst connotation of the term.[4] Or the "tendency" was contrasted with the

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re-created reality in a subjectivist, moralizing and preaching manner, thus making it a foreign element in the creative work.

It follows from the bourgeois conception of art (which Mehring was unable to abandon completely) that the "ideal" of art is the "absence of propaganda," and that solely circumstances unfavorable to the development of art (i.e. the intensification of class antagonisms) force "propaganda" upon it. As a sincere revolutionary, Mehring made an effort to deduce the correct, class conclusions, that is, he approved of "propaganda." But his political, class-determined standpoint was irreconcilably opposed to his artistic judgment. He expresses this very clearly, without realizing the import of his words:

> "In all revolutionary epochs and in all classes fighting for their emancipation taste is always considerably obscured by logic and morals, which, translated into philosophical terms, merely means that esthetic judgment will always suffer whenever knowledge and the appetitive faculty are under great strain." (*Works,* Vol. II, p. 263.)

Here we have the germ of the *literary theory of Trotzkyism.* For when Trotzky says that "the dictatorship of the proletariat is not an organization for the production of the culture of a new society, but a revolutionary and military system struggling for it" (*Literature and Revolution,* p. 190), it is obvious that in Trotzky's argument *culture in general plays the rôle that* (*Kantian*) *"pure art" played for Mehring.* This fits in with the greater intensity of the class struggle today and the concrete form taken on by all problems in it. Later on Trotzky writes: "Revolutionary literature cannot but be imbued with a spirit of social hatred . . . (thus it is merely "propaganda art"—G.L.) Under Socialism solidarity will be the basis of society" (*ibid,* p. 230). In other words, "pure art" and "true culture" are attainable.

Hence it is no mere accident that Mehring's heritage, uncritically accepted, has promoted Trotzkyism in our theories of literature and culture. Nor that every mechanical abatement of our literary aims consciously or unconsciously, deliberately or involuntarily must lead to Trotzkyist views.

III.

It is beyond the scope of this essay to analyze all the theoretical errors of these views; that has already been done *in extenso* in the polemic against Trotzkyism. We shall confine ourselves to the error of decisive importance to the problem in hand: the false, undialectical conception of the *subjective factor.*

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It is the realization of social necessity that—contrary to both the mechanist and idealist viewpoints—fixes the correct (and important) place of the subjective factor in history. And the latter is determined differently for the proletariat than for other classes. Marx's statement that "the working class has no ideals to realize" applies *solely* to the proletariat. It is to the other classes (including the bourgeoisie in its revolutionary stage) that Engels' aphorism applies: "ideology is a process consciously performed by the so-called thinker, but with the wrong consciousness" (Letter to Mehring, July 14, 1893). This "wrong consciousness" results either in the accrediting of a magnified independence and a leading rôle to conscious human activity in the historical process, or else its relegation to no active importance at all. This is also manifested in the appearance of the subjective factor in the shape of "morality" and of its aims as "ideals."

Even those bourgeois writers and philosophers who do penetrate fairly deeply into the dialectics of history get lost in foggy mysticism or remain entangled in contradictions which they cannot resolve. (Hegel, for instance, in whom Marx found an "uncritical idealism" together with an equally "uncritical positivism.") And when they are able to perceive the real, objective motive forces of social development, they do so with the "wrong consciousness," unintentionally, unconsciously, and often even against their own will. In discussing Balzac, Engels pointed out that Balzac deliberately intended to glorify the declining class of the French *ancien régime,* but that "he was compelled, against his own class sympathies and political prejudices" to paint a correct and exhaustive picture of the society of his day. His "propaganda" [or "tendency"], therefore, is opposed to his creative portrayal; his creative work is important not because of its "tendency," but in spite of it. (This is also true of Tolstoy and other important bourgeois authors.)

The proletariat is not subject to this ideological limitation. For its social existence enables the proletariat (and hence the revolutionary proletarian writers) to transcend this limitation, to perceive the class relationships and the development of the class struggle behind the fetishist forms of capitalist society. Insight into these interrelationships and the laws of their evolution likewise signifies insight into the proletariat's historical function and into the rôle of the subjective factor in this development. This holds good both for the determination of this subjective factor by objective, economic-historical evolution and for the active function of this subjective factor in the transformation of objective conditions.

This knowledge is not a mechanical, direct product of social existence:

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it must be achieved. But the process of gaining it is also the product of the inner (material and ideological) stratification of the proletariat. At the same time it aids in the proletariat's development from a "class in itself" to a "class for itself," as Marx puts it in his *Poverty of Philosophy;* it aids in the latter's inner organizations for the fulfilment of its historical task. (*e.g.,* the rise of trade unions and parties, their growth, etc.)

If the subjective factor in history is so defined—and the proletarian revolutionary writer who has mastered dialectical materialism must so define it—all the problems discussed above in connection with "propaganda" cease to be problems. The writer then rejects the dilemma of "pure art" versus "propaganda art." For there is no room for an "ideal," either moral or esthetic, in his work, which is a portrayal of objective reality, its actual motive forces and its actual trends of development. He makes no "external" demands upon his recreation of reality, for—if he is to mirror reality correctly, i.e. dialectically—his recreation of it must itself contain the fate of those demands (which arise really and concretely out of the class struggle) as integrating factors of objective reality, as arising out of it and reacting upon it. And he likewise rejects the other dilemma of the "tendentious" weaving of "propaganda" into creative work—the naked, direct contradistinction between "propaganda" and the image of reality. He does not need to distort, rearrange or "tendentiously" color reality, for his portrayal—if it is a correct, dialectical one—is founded upon the perception of those tendencies (in the justified Marxian sense of the term) that make themselves felt in objective evolution. And no "tendency" can be set up as a "demand" in contrast to this objective reality, for the demands made by the writer are an integral part of the dynamics of this very same reality—the effects as well as the antecedents of its dynamics.

All this likewise indicates that the rejection of "propaganda" by no means signifies Freiligrath's "above the battle" standpoint for the writer, which he felt is higher than any "partisan position." On the contrary, *correct dialectical portrayal and literary re-creation of reality presuppose partisanship on the writer's part.* What is more, not Herwegh's abstract, subjectivist, undifferentiated "partisanship in general," but partisanship on the side of the class that is the instrument of historical progress in our time—the proletariat.

This partisanship differs from "propaganda" and "tendentious" portrayal in that it is not inconsistent with objectivity in reproducing and re-creating reality. Quite the contrary, it is the *necessary prerequisite*

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for true—dialectical—objectivity. Contrary to "propaganda" (in which support of something means its idealist glorification, while opposition to it involves its distortion) and to "impartiality" (whose motto—never practiced—is: "to understand all means to forgive all," which involves taking an unconscious and hence almost always hypocritical stand), this sort of partisanship achieves the standpoint that makes possible the cognition and creative portrayal of the *entire process* as the summed-up totality of its real motive forces, as the perpetual, ever-higher reproduction of its underlying dialectical contradictions. This objectivity is based upon the correct—dialectical—determination of the relationship between subjectivity and objectivity, of the subjective factor to objective development. It is founded upon the dialectical unity of theory and practice. The analyses made by Marx, Engels and Lenin furnish models of how this dialectical unity is to be understood. To cite but one example, from Lenin:

> "It is the bourgeoisie's business to develop trusts, to force women and children into factories, to exploit and ruin them there, and to condemn them to extreme privation. We do not 'demand' such a course, nor do we 'support' it; we fight against it. How do we combat it, however? We realize that trusts and women working in factories represent progress. We do not propose a return to hand craftsmanship, to capitalism without monopolies, or to women working at home. Forward through trusts and their like and beyond them to Socialism!" (*Against the Current,* 1914-1917.)

Partisanship in this sense, therefore, is not a new term for an old idea. It is not a matter of substituting the word "partisanship" for "tendency" ["propaganda"] and leaving everything else unchanged. For terminology is never fortuitous. Our adoption of the term "tendency" from the literary theory and practice of the oppositional bourgeoisie (and not even from the epic period of its revolutionary history) signified, as we have shown, that we took over a not inconsiderable ideological aggregate together with the word. Today, when we are subjecting the ideological heritage of the Second International in our own theory and practice to thorough revision, we must see to it that we do not drag along in our literary theory and practice—impeding our progress— a bourgeois legacy transmitted through the Second International.

We have endeavored to give a brief sketch of the theory of "tendency." We should like to ask, in concluding, whether this theory has had any effect upon our practice. Of course it has. We do not mean the literary practices of Trotzkyism alone, in all its conscious or uncon-

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scious variations; we include *even the best of our literature written up to the present.* Has the latter really succeeded in advancing to partisanship, which makes possible a dialectical, objective re-creation of the entire process of our time? The answer is obvious: our literature is still full of "propaganda," even in its best works. For rarely does it succeed in re-creating what the class-conscious section of the proletariat aims at and is doing because of the latter's insight into the driving forces behind the whole process, and as the representative of the great historical interests of the working class. Only in rare instances is it able to re-create this as a will and a deed that arise dialectically from this same total process and are themselves indispensable factors in this process of objective reality.

The re-creation of the subjective factor in revolutionary development is too often replaced by a merely subjective (because uncreated) "wish" on the author's part: "propaganda." And when the author portrays this wish as objective and fulfilled, instead of truly (i.e dialectically) re-creating the subjective factor wtih its desires and its behavior, the portrayal becomes "propagandistic." There is no reason to deny these mistakes and defects, nor to ascribe them to "technical weaknesses" or "technical awkwardness." The same method that discloses our mistakes and uncovers their roots: the unliquidated heritage of the Second International, is the method that helps us to overcome them: materialist dialectics, Marxism-Leninism. Partisanship instead of "propaganda" is an important point where we can and must effect this advance towards the utilization of Marxism-Leninism for our creative work.

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BOOKS

THREE URBAN STUDIES

> *Great writers are generally born in the wombs of great crises; they reflect all the colorfulness and all the restless dynamics of the crisis, and the main spring of their work is their anxiety to find some kind of solution, a consoling answer to the burning questions of life.*
>
> A. LUNACHARSKY

THE YOUNG MANHOOD OF STUDS LONIGAN, *by James T. Farrell. The Vanguard Press, New York.* $2.50.
ON THE SHORE, *by Albert Halper. The Viking Press, New York.* $2.00.
SUCH IS MY BELOVED, *by Morley Callaghan. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.* $2.00.

The crisis has changed the center of gravity in American literature. The milieu of the past decade was rural or provincial; Winesburg, Ohio and Gopher Prairie were the nodes. The classic character was that of the sensitive, sorrowful young Werther in the insensible bourgeois world. It was a literature of selfconsciousness and though it masked itself in the naturalist costume it was secretly wed to the romantic idealist tradition.

One thousand nine hundred twenty-nine fractured the world these young men sought to conquer. It ruffled the complacency of the romantic-aesthete gesture that was a counterpart of the smugness of the social and economic perspectives of the bourgeoisie. The febrile philistinism of self-consciousness was exposed to the merciless glare of reality; it died. Social consciousness replaced it; slowly this is settling into class moulds, crystallizing into a purposive probing of the world and its organization.

The three books here under consideration are examples of the *process* rather than the *fulfillment* of this phenomenon. In varying degrees they reflect this ferment, they betray the umbilic relation to the naturalist and romantic traditions, of the past decade. Insofar as they have reacted to the immediate world they have brought something fresh and powerful into American literature; where they have not been able to destroy their yesterdays they have failed. Their books contain two worlds. Their greatest value is in their breathtaking promise. To the writer who will dare create "a consoling answer to the burning questions of life" belongs the future.

Farrell has chosen a large and detailed canvas for *The Young Man-*

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hood of Studs Lonigan. He has done more than write the biography of one inarticulate boy living his futile life; he has chronicled the Chicago South side in the decade following immediately upon the war, vividly re-creating the life of a city within a city, reporting the dialectic of life and death in the Catholic migration and the Negro influx.

No writer I know of has succeeded in revealing as much of the child mind as Farrell has done. He possesses a rare and profound insight into the adolescent mind and he has given us valuable clinical material on the city boy. More, he has written the case history of an entire section within a city; it is significant that the introduction to his first book, *Young Lonigan,* was written by a sociologist who appreciated his authoritative record of interstitial neighborhoods. It is significant because Farrell has not really written a novel; his method has been cumulative rather than qualitative. He has produced a profound and moving diary. The writer himself was not purposive; he did not seek an answer to the burning questions of life. Farrell has only taken the first step in the crisis, he has been impressed by the degradation and futility of life today. But he has not been aware of a pattern in people and in society that would lend direction to his book.

The children Farrell is dealing with come from righteous middle class homes. He has not motivated or traced the transformation of these children into pool room habitues, hoodlums and incipient gangsters. There is a fault he shares in common with Edward Dahlberg. Both authors reduce their characters to the lowest common denominator; because they are dealing with an inarticulate character they divest him of all elements of consciousness—often to their own embarrassment. The reader may recall that in *Young Lonigan,* after the gang-shagging of Iris we were asked to accept in one blow that Davey Cohen beside being a hard-boiled young hooligan, also was a sensitive, introspective child who read many books. In *Young Manhood* we are informed in one short paragraph that Danny O'Neill resents the life he is leading, that he plans to become a writer and create a book that will repudiate it. This resentment and consciousness is as much a part of the life Farrell is recording as the unleavened world of the toughs. Had he integrated both these elements he would have found the three dimensional pattern of this life, he could have emphasized the consoling answer that Danny O'Neill was discovering—the Soviet way. Instead the author has imposed himself upon his milieu and constricted it.

These limitations, we must remember, are the limitations of growth. *The Young Manhood of Studs Lonigan* is a deeper and surer book than Farrell's earlier work. He has shown an increasing mastery of his craft. Today Farrell is one of the most sensitive recorders of the American language, in his book he has captured the vigor and richness of the American *argot.* As he leaves the naturalist tradition and moulds his work with a sense of direction and purposiveness he will fulfill the major promise he now shows.

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Halper is a younger writer than Farrell. In *On the Shore* he is not yet free from the self-consciousness of his own development. The book records people of the same years, the same city, and the same social stratum with which Farrell deals. The writing is uneven, extending from the intensely poetic and effective to the inept; it is the work of a writer serving his apprenticeship. Because he is a less sophisticated writer than Farrell, because he has approached his characters more tenderly, he has succeeded in revealing integral aspects of a personality that the oversimplifications of Farrell do not allow. In such stories as *The Feud in the Rotunda,* which relates what happened to post office employees when the government put a stamp selling machine into the postal station, and in *Going To Market,* a story relating the murder of a Negro by two white fellow workers, as it is seen by a nine-year-old child, Halper, beside recording the futility, degradation and misery of lower class life, has revealed social implications that Farrell does not touch. *The Penny Divers, The Race, Hot Night On The West Side,* are other stories in the Halper book worth reading.

Such Is My Beloved by Morley Callaghan is the story of an earnest priest just out of the seminary who learns painfully that there is as unbridgeable gap between Christian Charity and the institutionalized practice of the Catholic Church. His attempts to rehabilitate two streetwalkers who accost him one evening bring him into conflict with his parishioners and his Bishop and drive him finally to an asylum for the mentally unbalanced.

Mr. Callaghan has indicated beyond a doubt the economic base for prostitution as well as the class interest to which the church is bound. He has forged a novel that is striking in its simplicity and has drawn with certain, unaffected strokes the character of Lou, the pimp, Ronnie and Midge, the girls, and Mrs. Robison, a wealthy parishioner. However, he has cut his theme and his people from the surrounding world. Instead of relating them to the city where they lived, he has chosen to evolve them empirically. No more than ten or twelve people are concerned in his story, one of whom,a medical student thinking about joining the Communist Party, is a close friend of father Dowling, the earnest young priest. The Cathedral to which Father Dowling is attached and the hotel around the corner where the girls ply their trade are both part of a large city and its life. In the novel this never comes through. About the book there is a wistful aura that obscures the harsh, city atmosphere, the brittle, neon lighted streets, the tight, self contained people. Because Callaghan has not related his characters to the city, because he has not enlarged the problem of these two streetwalkers to contain the many other women in a similar predicament, *Such Is My Beloved,* despite its freshness, simplicity, and excellent workmanship remains a slight book.

But, Callaghan, too, with this book has taken a stand. He is now part of the ferment that is changing the young *Werther* literature into

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a portrait of disintegrating capitalist society in America. As he grows away from yesterday, as all three writers here considered repudiate their legacy—will they grow into the heritage of tomorrow.

NATHAN ADLER

THE NOVELIST AS A PARTISAN

PARCHED EARTH, *by Arnold B. Armstrong. The Macmillan Co. N. Y.* $2.50.

THE SHADOW BEFORE, *by William Rollins, Jr. Robert M. McBride & Co. N. Y.* $2.50.

For some years Marxist critics in America have busied themselves with the building of a theoretical scaffolding for a partisan literature expressing the revolutionary reconstruction of society. Their efforts have not been in vain; in fact they could not have been in vain. But now there can no longer be any doubt about it. The new class novels coming off the press month after month, the new literary magazines springing up all over country—all these are signs of a promise fulfilled. They prove the fusion of theory and practice in American revolutionary literature and its leaving behind the incipient phase of creative helplessness. No hue and cry of propaganda, no lugubrious head-shaking of wiseacres, and no amount of sneering on the part of those who persist in tracing their palsied hieroglyphics on the fly-paper of bourgeois class impotence, can arrest its progress.

The primary merit of *Parched Earth* and *The Shadow Before* lies in the fact that their authors are acutely conscious of the *material* reality of act and character. And it is precisely this consciousness of the economic factor as the leading factor in the determinism of life under capitalism that makes it possible for them not merely to state the mounting contradiction between the classes but also to resolve it. In both novels the solution is definitely established: not externally, through the well-known device of preaching and finger-pointing, but internally, through the inevitable logic of social necessity materializing in highly articulate images of existing life. Hence both novels, though the sensibilities of Armstrong and Rollins are poles asunder, postulate one solution: the proletarian revolution. True, in *Parched Earth* this implicit solution flows out of the total complex of events and characterization with much less effectiveness than in *The Shadow Before;* and this, I believe, can be directly traced to Armstrong's inadequate mastery of literary art and to his somewhat outdated sensibility, which slashes with a 19th century blade. All too often the drama of social conflict in Caldwell, the typical California fruit and cannery town which is the novel's locale, boils over into melodrama, and the action and portrayal contain too many elements that are

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mainly moralistic in emphasis. These weaknesses, however, should not prevent the reader from seeing the large human panorama revealed in the book, and its merciless probing into the horror, the truly monstrous corruption of this small town, this Main Street seen not through the eyes of a Sinclair Lewis, who is nothing but Main Street's stool-pigeon, but through the eyes of a revolutionist pulsing with that "noble proletarian hate" towards the exploiting class, which, as Lenin once said, is "the beginning of all wisdom."

In many ways the catastrophic character of the story of *Parched Earth* reminds one of Robinson Jeffers' repertory of violent sequences. When Wally, the idiot son of Belle Vasquez, the town prostitute, and Everett Caldwell, the syphilitic capitalist in control of the town, blows up the dam and lets loose a flood that puts an end to most of the characters as well as to their physical setting, one feels the same moral and esthetic pleasure as in reading the chapter on Sodom in the Bible. But the awaresess of this similarity ends in revulsion. One begins to question the author's choice of principals among his characters. Why should Hattie Rathbone, the old maid yearning for a child, consume so many pages, while Washburn, the Communist organizer of the cannery workers, is drawn so sketchily, never being allowed to develop the action immanent in his presence and repeatedly intimated? The recent agricultural strikes in California draw attention to the organic fitness of such action to the locale and to the times. Moreover, the entire symbol of horrible physical disease, though at times successfully energized in a class manner, seems somewhat arbitrary. And Everett Caldwell, the town magnate, is never seen in relation to his superiors, the bankers in the big cities, but is drawn as a self-sufficient force, towering over the human landscape of the novel.

The story of *The Shadow Before* revolves around the Bauman-Jones Mills at Fullerton, New England. With a psychological realism unexcelled in any revolutionary novel as yet written by an American, we are shown how the role of each individual involved in the great mass strike organized by the Communists is motivated by his class interests. Rollins employs the psychological method in revealing the working out of these interests in the detailed action, and he does this successfully because each of his psychological perceptions is a projection of social character, and as such is rooted in class reality. This method is especially well realized in Harry Baumann, the mill-owner's son who joins in with the strikers, whose act of renunciation is seen in all its contradictions, an act by no means integral, but impregnated with all the mad adventurism and neurasthenia induced by a life of excesses. A type of "pure fascism" is effectively shown in Benjamin Thayer, the mill-superintendent who heads the vigilantes; and in Micky Bonner, whose progress to class-consciousness is so convincingly portrayed, the author has illustrated the manner in which this all-important thematic element in revolutionary fiction can be used without jarring on the credibility of skeptical readers.

One of the significant aspects of *The Shadow Before* lies in the fact

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that it proves the validity of the Marxian principle of cultural continuity. In accepting the proletarian view Rollins has not made the mistake of discarding the literary heritage, as many writers have done with grave damage to their creative power. He has written a novel devoid of that communist self-consciousness that results in formula, rather than in the imaginative re-creation of life.

I can discern one major fault in the book. The character of Marvin, the chief organizer of the strike, is not fully realized; he is seen somewhat statically, and is given only a minor part in the psychological ramifications of the novel. This is connected with the impression of spontaneity in the description of the strike's organization. The conscious element in the leadership is not sufficiently stressed; the guiding hand is seen through a mist.

PHILIP RAHV

ELIOT TAKES HIS STAND

THE USE OF POETRY AND THE USE OF CRITICISM *by T. S. Eliot. Harvard University Press.* 1933. $2.

AFTER STRANGE GODS, *by T. S. Eliot. Faber and Faber, Limited. London.* 1934.

"And reasons of race and religion combine to make any large number of free-thinking Jews undesirable," says Eliot in *After Strange Gods,* a volume of three lectures delivered at the University of Virginia. Eliot's zest for stumping on every reactionary platform at hand has led us to await some precise pronouncement of allegiance to fascism. Though he has subtly avoided any such open exposure, the evolution of his views toward the right, the implicit reactionary politics throughout his writing, and his latest medley of feudal and Catholic themes in *After Strange Gods* leave no doubt as to his position. Only the blind would hesitate to call Eliot a fascist.

The cryptic and lucid insights of Eliot's early criticism into many English writers won him a large following among young American and English writers. But this influence is rapidly thinning down, as the expansions of his views in his later writing shows a shocking confusion on fundamental questions, an evasion of the major critical problems of our time, and an ever more ecstatic espousal of the church, the state, an aristocracy of intellect, racial purity—in short, of most of the forces and myths which foster fascism.

In *After Strange Gods,* Eliot subscribes to the feudal agrarianism and regional patriotism championed by the contributors to *I'll Take My Stand.* Foreign immigration into the North, and especially the Northeast, represents to Eliot a dangerous threat to the racial and cultural traditions of the South. Even the Civil War, says Eliot, disturbed that nice balance

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between the cultures of North and South. Purity of race and unity of tradition resting solidly on the Catholic Church are the white hope of civilization and art.

As Eliot has been donning his clerical robes, he has sought to shift his literary theories to fit his religious aims. For example, two of Eliot's most cherished ideas were that the task of the critic is to stick to literature, without straying onto the thorny paths of psychology, sociology or philosophy, and that the beliefs in a literary work are relevant to any judgment of its value only insofar as the beliefs must be mature. The contradictions which follow are obviously tremendous, but Eliot solves them by the simple method of making unproven assertions. In *After Strange Gods* he announces frankly, "I ascended the platform of these lectures only in the role of moralist," and he concludes with the statement that "there are standards of criticism . . . . which we may apply to whatever is offered to us as works of philosophy or of art, which might help to render them safe and more profitable for us." Eliot tries to use these religious standards in evaluating the work of Lawrence, Hardy, Joyce, Pound and Yeats. In some sleight-of-hand fashion, which I confess I follow very imperfectly, Lawrence emerges a heretic, and Joyce an example of orthodoxy. An illustration of Eliot's new criterion is his theory that "with the disappearance of the idea of Original Sin, with the disappearance of the idea of intense moral struggle, the human beings presented to us both in poetry and in prose fiction today tend to become less and less real." Finally, in contradiction to his theory of belief in poetry, Eliot does a little log-rolling for devotional poetry.

The Use of Poetry has some of the merits of Eliot's early criticism and most of the absurdities of his later work. Scattered through the book are suggestive aperçus into the form and style of various poets, the relation of some criticism to poetry of a period, and the sensibility and perception of some critics. But the frame of his ideas wobbles on the quicksand of his confusions. And there is the old evasiveness, the thousand and one qualifications, the authoritarianism, which Eliot has so effectively stylized. And political reaction breaks through here and here, sometimes more, sometimes less, directly.

Eliot's conclusion: "I have no general theory of my own" really defines the character of the book. A number of theories from Campion to the moderns are reviewed, to show, as Eliot says, the constant readaptation of criticism and poetry to each other. And, though Eliot adds the factor of readaptation to social changes, he nowhere observes any but the most superficial relations. The entire book is sketchy, and one cannot point to any important generalizations emerging from the historical analyses. There is, however, one healthy emphasis throughout: an emphasis on the practical side of criticism as against the tendency to irrelevant speculation. Eliot properly points out the superiority of Dryden, for example, over Johnson, and of Wordsworth and Coleridge over Arnold. But his zeal to make this distinction carries Eliot to the absurd characterization of criticism today as in the Arnold stage. This

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includes, of course, in Eliot's majestic sweep, both sociological and Marxist criticism. In an appendix of quotations in *After Strange Gods,* supposedly exemplifying types of heresy in modern thought, Eliot includes a statement on Communism (choosing, as might be expected, John Middleton Murry, a self-titled Communist, as the spokesman).

Eliot seems to recognize that one of the most important questions in criticism is the relation of art to "life." But he characteristically reasons all around the question, granting the relation abstractly, but denying it concretely, and muffing all the essential implications. Taking Trotsky as spokesman for Marxism on art, he grants Trotsky's conceptions of art as "handmaiden," and then uses Trotsky's anti-proletarian views to separate revolutionary ideas from art, to deny the revolutionary power of proletarian art, and to argue that "a period of revolution is not favorable to art." But the most shameful piece of juggling is Eliot's derision of Shelley's revolutionary ideas as adolescent, borrowed from that "humbug" Godwin. Eliot then uses obvious defects in much of Shelley's poetry as an example of how immature ideas wreck native talent. And with a great gesture of fairness, he admits prejudice against Shelley's ideas, but insists that it is their immaturity, and not his inability to accept them which keeps him from enjoying Shelley's poetry, as he does Dante's and that of other "mature" and religious poets.

Eliot is rubbing shoulders with every myth and dogma which is used by capitalism to maintain itself. His gods are the caricatures and monsters of fascism.

WALLACE PHELPS

FROM SMITH COLLEGE TO PIT COLLEGE

I WENT TO PIT COLLEGE, *by Lauren Gilfillan. The Viking Press,* $2.50.

A 22-year old girl, Smith College '31, cannot find a job in New York. She goes to the mining town of Avelonia, 35 miles from Pittsburgh, to get material for a book. She eats and sleeps with the miners, spends a day down in a mine, marches on the picket line, hangs around the relief kitchen, participates in demonstrations, listen in an a YCL meeting, and witnesses class justice administered with the jailing of militant miners and Communists on brazen, trumped-up charges.

Lauren Gilfillan's experiences will undoubtedly give thousands of readers their first real picture of life in a mining town. They will see the mass unemployment, the hunger, diseases, squalor, illiteracy, the terror and dumping of workers like slag on the heap, all in the shadow of the giant tipples. They will become aware of the importance of the National Miners Union, the Communist Party, and the *Daily Worker* in

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the daily struggle of Avelonia's workers to free themselves from actual serfdom. For these reasons the book has its value.

Unfortunately, Lauren Gilfillan is first and only a "writer." She can never forget that in her life with the miners. Her equipment consists of a typewriter, a pad and pencil, a college education which probably taught her English, and a notion that the writer must keep his role of a detached observer even tho it kill him in the end. Such an equipment does not prepare a writer for an understanding of the class struggle. Gilfillan honestly admits her "abysmal ignorance and indifference to international economy." She can call Communism a religion as tho Lenin, Marx, and Stalin with their tremendous scientific contributions to a new life are theologians. Not once in all her book does she aim at or mention the mine operators who are responsible for all this exploitation and misery. And that is why despite the praise of liberal reviewers the book has a lot of shooting in the air, some shooting at the workers which will give comfort to the exploiters.

This lack of equipment does not fit the writer to understand a class-conscious worker. It puts her on a high horse and lets her write with amused tolerance about a YCL meeting. It blunts her pen when she writes of "mining town justice." In writing of the most outrageous injustice, she keeps her temper, she does not even scratch blood. On the contrary, she admits feeling very much bewildered in the court room, much like Alice in Wonderland; "they were all turning into figures out of a ridiculous fairy story." This of workers who are going to be sentenced to years in jail! Her very style suffers because of this lack of understanding, this foreignness to her material. Her imagery, pulled from her middle class life, jars one with its inappropriateness. Workers must be dealt with in terms of their own class and experience. But Gilfillan generally stands between her readers and the workers. To get her picture she will often give you a lump which she crumbles into bits for your understanding whereas a revolutionary writer can give you this understanding in a flash. This limited equipment often finds her digging around with a toothpick where a jackhammer is required.

Gilfillan's fetish to be objective goes to such lengths as to defeat its own purpose. When she yells to the police to come back after they've broken up a meeting in order to get their point of view, she is naturally branded as a spy. The workers force her to leave town, thereby bringing up her story short when it possibly might have gone on to add more strength. Again when one of the Communists brands her in a powerful speech an art-for-art's saker, all she answers is, "Shirley, you're gorgeous." She is responsible for the expulsion from the YCL of the boy miner, Johnny, who is in love with her. Johnny is thus cut off from the Party, the feed cord that liberates and strengthens the spirit and makes life humanly possible in that brutalized town. She does nothing to intercede with the comrades or explain she's to blame. The last evening she tells Johnny she is not in love with him, and then with a bang, grabs pencil and paper and fires questions at him for material. To such indecency and heartlessness will a writer go worshipping objectivity.

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The hunger for stuff to fill her book is the hunger to fill the author's belly. She writes to earn a living. The obsession which drives her so feverishly to avoid taking sides is that by taking sides she will make her loaf small. She says to herself that the workers "hate what they think you stand for—and you do stand for it, and you can't get away from it, no matter what your material condition." The daughter of poor social workers, having worked in a corset factory, Gilfillan shows no understanding of the present situation of her own class, of how it is being ground down, of how it can save itself only by uniting forces and following the aroused working class. And Gillllan must further understand that even such books as hers will be banned and burned on the public square if the Blue Eagle with its fascist wings succeeds in battering down lower the workers, the farmers, the petty bourgeoisie of this country. She will go hungry and be riddled in the crossfire between the revolutionary workers and the capitalist class unless she joins the only side that will give her honest bread and a chance to develop as a creative writer—the working class.

BEN FIELD

GORMAN'S PICTURESQUE PUPPETS

JONATHAN BISHOP, *by Herbert Gorman.* $2.50. *Farrar & Rhinehart, Inc.*

HOLLYWOOD, EISENSTEIN ONCE REMARKED, sees a revolution as a picturesque background for a love story. The erstwhile biographer and imitator of such diverse writers as James Joyce and Alexandre Dumas, however, attempts to retell the history of the Franco-Prussian War and the Paris Commune to illustrate a dilettante's sermon on how a young American becomes disillusioned with revolution.

Although structurally this novel clings leech-like to a biographical pattern, with every event seen only through the hero's eyes, no motives are given for any of his actions outside of a single, brief love affair. Jonathan Bishop is just an omnipresent sightseer, with no goal in life, a mouthpiece for the author's maudlin sentimentalism over the debacle of the Second Empire and the attempted destruction of the bourgeois state.

Gorman's hatred of the "heaven stormers" of 1871 is so violently bitter that he does not grant that the Parisian masses had a single cause for complaint with the *status quo.* There are no convincing explanations of how the various historical and fictitious revolutionary characters arrived at their "fanatical beliefs," or why Bishop, even for a brief time. should have had radical sympathies. As a result the hero and the protagonists of the Commune remain wooden puppets and they are juggled around so clumsily that the illusion of reality is never created.

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The historical passages show no evidence of scholarly research (Gorman apparently has never read Lissagaray's *The Paris Commune of* 1871 or Marx's *The Civil War in France*); they are crippled by gross distortions and perforated with gaping omissions. Unlike the great bourgeois realists—Balzac, Dickens, Daudet and Zola—never once does Gorman contrast the poverty of the masses under Napoleon the Little with the extravagances of the court. He makes no attempt to probe the real causes of the Franco-Prussian War, which largely resulted from Napoleon's desire to check the growth of republican sentiments in France.

Ignoring Napoleon's Decembriseur agents-provocateurs, who stirred up jingo manifestations, he asserts, "The Emperor would do anything at all within reason and commensurate with the dignity of France to avoid war. He does not want it . . . . But he must consider the temper of the people."

There is no hint that the Rothschilds played any part in the holocaust; that Napoleon III had made the German munitions magnate, Krupp, an Officer of the French Legion of Honor; that the Emperor's police in 1868 had dissolved the Paris section of the First International following the successful bronze workers' strike; that the German deputies Bebel and Liebknecht were imprisoned for opposing the Franco-Prussian War or that the Thiers-Trochu Government of National Defense prolonged the siege of Paris to annihilate countless thousands of revolutionary workers.

The refusal of the proletarian National Guard to surrender its privately constructed artillery, the move that started the revolution, is misrepresented; Marx in 1871—23 years after the publication of *The Communist Manifesto* and four years after the publication of *Das Kapital* —is termed an "unknown" man; the outstanding revolutionist, Blanqui, is pictured as directing the Commune when actually he was held a prisoner by Thiers outside of Paris and a fictional character, Gauthier de Saint-Just (who is apt to be confused with Antoine Saint-Just of the French Revolution) is shown as the secret, supreme revolutionary dictator. The alliance of the recent enemies, the German Bismarck and the French Thiers, to suppress the Commune is ignored. Likewise no account is given of Thiers' white terror, which drowned the first Universal Republic in the blood of forty thousand workers.

Gorman contends that the revolutionists' philosophy was "they who were on the bottom shall be on top whether they are fitted so to be mentally, physically and morally or not." With the blind venom of a Carlyle libeling the heroes of the French Revolution, he presents every revolutionist, historical and fictitious, as having "popping bloodshot eyes," "yellow fangs," "huge loose red lips," "a thin crooked mouth," etc.

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Delescluze, the heroic Civil Delegate for War, "was an old man, with long hair, unclean, unshaven, and dressed in a shabby coat. His hands were dirty and the nails were black rims to his fingers. About his neck he wore a coarse scarf loosely tied *à la mode de Marat.* Washburne watched him swagger back to the table." Flourens is "fierce-eyed." A fictitious character, Denyse Zinh, accuses the brilliant Raoul Rigault, procurator for the Commune, of having lecherous designs on her. Even a revolutionist's picture causes Gorman to fume about "degenerate lion faces like Bakunin."

Le us hope that P. Pavlenko's recent novel, *Barricades,* will be translated and published soon in America to popularize the real history and significance of the first dictatorship of the proletariat.

WALTER SNOW

WHOSE TRAGEDY?

A MODERN TRAGEDY, *by Phyllis Bentley. Macmillan.* $2.50.

Miss Bentley chooses as the thematic frame of her third novel the interwoven lives of representative characters of a typical industrial textile town of rural England. In Hudley, its chimneys smoking along the Yorkshire hills, Miss Bentley's people, old and new school textile manufacturers, young middle class aspirants, domestic politically-indifferent workers, and fiery union leaders, move in well-regulated Victorian patterns through the years of the crisis, their destinies knitted by the machines, to climax a "tragicless" modern tragedy.

For after following the fortunes of the characters, one can justly ask "whose tragedy is this modern tragedy?"

Miss Bentley has her answer. It is the tragedy of all. Speculator and union organizer. Manufacturer and textile worker. "Outside, hungry and desperate men paraded; within, the men who had most experience in organizing their industry were being tried for a crime of personal greed." The town of Hudley, to Miss Bentley, as well as all the industrial towns of the world, is torn with tragedy because of a "limitation of vision" on the part of those "who had most experience in organizing their industry" and those "who never thought of anyone but their own class." The modern tragedy is therefore a tragedy of waste. Milner Schofield, instead of leading the unemployed in a hunger-march on London, might have been spending his valuable time turning out excellent clothes for the Messrs. Lumb. Marx defined "normal" capitalism as meaning a "normal" inflow of profit i.e. "normal" exploitation.

This essential liberalism expresses itself not only in Miss Bentley's social welfare worker's political pleas for class harmony but also reveals itself in the weak dramatic structure of the novel and in the shoddy, false, sentimentalized psychology of her people. Drama and tragedy do

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not inhere in the tender treatment of the deep social antagonisms that divide the classes, but in open, profound exposure of these chasms. And a bottom, in their heart of hearts, Miss Bentley's people are all noble. Under the swindler's mask, under the exploiter's cunning schemes, the liberal mind brings back the comforting message: the heart is pure beneath. Corruption is society's fault. And the final scene of the book, when Tasker, master swindler, convicted, standing in the dock awaiting sentence, catches the tear-brimming eyes of Rosamund, and succumbs to the rosy dream of the good respectable bourgeois he *might* have been, is such a debauch of sentimentality, such a crudely idealized version of the-regeneration-that-came-too-late that whatever merits *A Modern Tragedy* possesses vanish in this final bathos.

ALFRED HAYES

POTAMKIN'S LEGACY

THE EYES OF THE MOVIE, *by Harry Alan Potamkin. International Pamphlets. International Publishers,* 381 *4th Ave., N. Y. C.* 10 *cents.*

Notwithstanding its discursiveness, due doubtless to the fact that Potamkin died before he could complete and edit it for publication, *The Eyes of the Movie* is the most important piece of film criticism published in America. It presents for the first time a complete perspective on the cultural-propaganda content, the control and motivation of the bourgeois film: "The movie is valuable (to the ruling class) as a merchandise in itself, to sell other merchandise, as a vehicle for the 'national idea,' and as an instrument of imperialist control." Within the necessarily limited scope of a pamphlet, *The Eyes of the Movie* develops this well-put summary into a broad sketch of the American film scene, indicating Hollywood's treatment of the themes of Capital and Labor, the Negro, the Jew, war, Soviet Russia, etc. The Heraclitan flow of the movie and the opiate forgetfulness it inspires make it an extremely difficult medium to grasp and analyse in the light of its effect upon society. Though potent, its effects are insinuating. Hence, the scarcity of true film criticism. (Count the really good critics on your fingers: Moussinac, Belasz, Pudovkin, Potamkin and perhaps one or two others.) And hence the importance of Potamkin's scattered articles, and especially, this pamphlet, his most revolutionary work.

Potamkin's analysis is penetrating and pithy: "The movie is the modern ritual, and though its invitation is benevolence—its 'entertainment', its influence is 'propaganda'!" . . . "The (only) *problem* that may be faced is that of the restless agonies of the social register." . . . "(The) self-defense films (which) pretend to be social criticism . . . shift the social guilt from society to the individual and from the individual to nowhere." . . . "The Soviet kino sets war directly within the society

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producing it. A film devoted entirely to war can do nothing else but make war an ominous, therefore, compelling universe. The Soviet film makes war a portion of the film, the hideous peak of competitive society." . . .

Potamkin ends his pamphlet with a final call to revolutionary critics and film workers to consider more closely Capitalism's most seductive and treacherous instrument for demagogy and propaganda: "We must build —On the Left—the Movie." L. T. HURWITZ

S. S. UTAH, *by Mike Pell. International Publishers, 381 Fourth Ave., N. Y.* $.75.

S. S. Utah contains the kind of authentic material which is forming the backbone of revolutionary literature. The S. S. Utah is an American ship carrying a load of machines to the Soviet Union. On this floating factory the seaman are subjected to the exploitation and the brutalities which is the lot of workers throughout the capitalist world. The slow and confused revolt of the seamen against conditions on the ship are shaped and made articulate by Slim Rogers, an energetic member of the M.W.I.U. Also, the revelation to the sailors of the Soviet Union as the "workers' land," though somewhat mechanically presented, plays an important part in crystallizing the economic causes of the seamen's slavery on the ship.

For the very reason that Mike Pell presents objectively the actual struggles of the seamen, it is unfortunate that he has not integrated these into a more subtle and effective literary form. There are too many long speeches; the characters are mainly social rather than human types; and the events follow too arbitrary a pattern. Had its literary form been more effective, its revolutionary influence on workers would have feen even greater. W. R.

PILGRIM OF THE APOCALYPSE, *A Critical Study Of D. H. Lawrence, by Horace Gregory. New York, The Viking Press,* $1.50.

Horace Gregory makes a genuine contribution to the Lawrence discussion by emphasizing the significance of the father as a symbol in Lawrence's life. He indicates, too, the genuine aesthetic purpose Lawrence had in mind when he used sexual symbols to express the problems of human isolation.

However, he is so concerned with categorizing Lawrence, proving that he is in the great tradition of Romantic poets, that he forgets to remember that Lawrence wrote to save his soul. We had hoped that Gregory had written the book on Lawrence that only a revolutionary writer could do—the study of the proletarian and the development of his escapist philosophy—a problem that will grow more and more important. Gregory was so engrossed in his academic meanderings through the Lawrence symbology that he lost sight of Lawrence, the man. The critical study of D. H. Lawrence still remains to be written.

ROBERT KRESS

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JOHN REED CLUBS

A National Secretariat of the John Reed Clubs, consisting of Joseph Freeman, Joshua Kunitz, Phil Bard, William Siegel and Alan Calmer, was formed last month. Reports dealing with the work of the Clubs since their regional conferences in the summer of '33 indicate the development of the revolutionary cultural movement in this country.

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Leading members of the Chicago JRC have been active among local artists. They are members of the Chicago Artists Equity, which, to quote Gilbert Rocke, executive secretary of the Club, "came into existence as a united front of protest against conditions under which we are forced to live and produce our art." Hundreds of artists in the Equity protested against an official reception of Hans Wideman, Nazi painter and Hitler representative to the World Fair. Mass protests against the Public Works of Arts Project have been led by JRC artists.

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Harry Carlisle, one of the charter members of the Hollywood JRC came to Santa Fe late last year to complete his second novel. There he met Philip Stevenson, author of an outstanding story which appeared in the New Masses. Together they organized a local JRC. Members of the group carry on work among the Mexican and Spanish natives and among the miners at Madrid. They are also influencing the numerous painters and authors who stop at the local art colony.

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The Artists' Group of the New York JRC is holding a memorial exhibition of sculpture and drawing by Jacob Dainoff. Dainoff (1884-1933) was one of the few artists in America whose life was an intrinsic part of the revolutionary struggle of the working class. He was a professional revolutionist in Czarist Russia even before the 1905 revolution. During his active life as a labor organizer, Dainoff created a genuine working class art. He experimented with new media, doing his own casting in cheap metals and working them together with various woods. A catalogue containing reproductions of his work, together with a lengthy biography, may be obtained from the Club at 430 Sixth Avenue, New York. (10c).

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An outstanding series of mural paintings has just been completed in the Daily Worker Builders'

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room at the Workers Center in New York. The murals are the work of Phil Bard, a member of the JRC of New York. Three panels describe the class struggle in America today: the fight of the farmers, the revolt of the industrial workers and the misery of the unemployed. At right angles to these panels is another huge mural which is an artistic synthesis of all the gigantic achievements of the Soviet people.

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The Writers Group of the John Reed Club of New York is holding a series of Sunday night symposiums and lectures on art and literature. Among the coming lectures are such subjects as:

Proust, Joyce and Marxist Criticism

Fellow Travelers and Proletarian Literature

A Marxist Looks at Freud

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The Editors of PARTISAN REVIEW greet their contemporary, *Left Review,* formerly *Red Pen,* organ of the Philadelphia John Reed Club.

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The National Office of the John Reed Clubs is about to issue a *National Bulletin,* from which some of the above news has been selected.

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